The Nation.

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EDITORIAL

A RECIPE FOR ANARCHY

On December 29, the United Nations General Assembly roundly condemned the U.S. invasion of Panama. More than seventy-five nations voted for the resolution and forty more, many concerned they might be future targets for intervention, reluctantly abstained. Nonaligned countries fear that President Bush's *coup de Noriega*, in flagrant defiance of international norms, signifies a new world order that was formalized in the Malta talks. According to this scenario, the end of the cold war means a new global division of labor, presided over by condominiums of superpowers with specific regional responsibilities. The United States would be responsible for the Americas and the Middle East, the European community for Africa, and Japan for Asia. The Soviet Union would be left alone to concentrate on domestic development, provided that it did not interfere politically or militarily in the other spheres of interest. China would be odd man out, allowed relations not only with the superpowers but with the Third World.

It was because of this agreement that the Bush Administration could move so confidently against Panama to establish U.S. hegemony in the isthmus. The action underscored the right of a superpower to intervene within its sphere without fear of military reprisal by the other powers. The regional hegemons may treat their own regions as private preserves.

The Panama invasion also sets a precedent for violating another nation's sovereignty. The Bush Administration integrated its geopolitical strategic interests with a proclaimed war on drugs in order to make the invasion popular domestically. Nations may now wage war on drug producers, who do not have an army, navy or government. For the smaller nations—for all of us—this means we are entering a decade of international anarchy.

CHINA AFTER TIANANMEN
Anita Chan
Jonathan Unger

RACIAL FOOTBALL DOWN SOUTH
Colin Soloway

PUERTO RICAN MYTHS
Antonio M. Stevens-Arroyo

PLAY BALL
Elliott J. Gorn
David Nasaw
Felicia E. Halpert

TIM ROLLINS + K.O.S.
Arthur C. Danto

SAVING HYPOCRISY IN PANAMA

BUSH'S SPLENDID LITTLE WAR

RICHARD J. BARNET

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It was a made-to-order occasion for muscle flexing: a central-casting villain, with a weakness for drugs, voodoo, pornography and pictures of Hitler, who made clumsy threats and shed American blood; a relatively low-cost military operation to convince taxpayers that the $300 billion military budgets of recent years actually buy something you can use; a military victory for a commander in chief who is still suspected of wimpishness; and a glorious moment in the war against drugs—Bush finally got his man.

At any time in the 1980s the U.S. invasion of Panama would have looked like a throwback to the era of gunboat diplomacy. But as 1989, that extraordinary year, was about to be added to the history books, this unilateral use of force without even the fig leaf of legality that Ronald Reagan's spin doctors contrived for the Grenada invasion struck a defiantly anachronistic note. Shelling civilian neighborhoods in search of the thug who was once a prize asset of the Central Intelligence Agency was not without historical precedent, but in the revolutionary year just ended the whirlwind invasion collided head-on with the fresh breezes of peaceful change and democracy blowing in from across the Atlantic.

In 1989 people in Eastern Europe, in an extraordinary display of the courage of nonviolence, threw off the shackles of repressive rule. Even as talk of secession spread within the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev sent no tanks to what used to be called its satellites. In this historic moment President Bush restored "peace and democracy" in the so-called

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LETTERS.

DIRTY WORK

Alexandria, Va.

The recent article by Jim Sibbison ["Revolving Door at the E.P.A.," Nov. 6, 1989] concerning the Environmental Protection Agency contained information about our organization, Clean Sites Inc., that was true but damagingly incomplete. It is true that we are financed, in part, by many industrial companies, and that we receive major contributions from the corporations named in the article. However, the article fails to point out that our largest donors are independent major foundations with no ties to industry, i.e., the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. We also receive major support in our efforts with grants and contracts from the E.P.A. and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In addition, our board of directors is chaired by the head of the World Wildlife Fund, Russell Train, and includes the chair of Common Cause, Archibald Cox, the presidents of two of the largest environmental organizations in the country, the National Wildlife Federation and the National Audubon Society, and one of the most environmentally oriented Senators of the last twenty years, Robert Stafford.

In short, our organization maintains its effectiveness in dealing with hazardous waste problems by balancing both its funding and its direction. We believe this kind of balance is important in bringing about constructive solutions to problems both at the sixty hazardous waste sites around the country in which we have been involved, and in the public policy process of the nation.

Thomas P. Grumbly

SIBBISON REPLIES

Amherst, Mass.

On its own evidence, Clean Sites is beholden to industry. Its annual report for 1989 says: "Much of our progress is due to the generous contributions and support of our early beneficiaries, especially members of the Chemical Manufacturers Association." No special thanks are extended to anyone else.

Still, Thomas Grumbly expects us to believe that Clean Sites balances its funding and direction as a mediator of disputes over dump cleanups between chemical companies and the E.P.A. Given its reliance on corporate money, it doesn't matter how much foundation support Clean Sites enjoys or how many environmentalists sit on its board. Any way you look at it, Clean Sites has a conflict of interest.

Jim Sibbison

HERE COME THE 1990s

Larchmont, N.Y.

I enjoyed Robert Pollin's review of Robert Heilbroner and Peter Bernstein's book on the Federal deficit ["The Keynes Mutiny," Sept. 25, 1989] and the subsequent exchange of letters between authors and reviewer ["Exchange," Nov. 20, 1989]. For the most part their agreements are greater than their differences, which are more matters of emphasis than substance. But it seems to me that the way they present the deficit, as a more (or less) potent factor in the economic upswing of the 1980s, misses what is really the most important point. Without the deficit and its twin causes—a huge increase in military spending and a sharp reduction of taxes on the rich—the 1980s would most likely have been a decade of stagnation like the 1930s. And putting it this way starkly poses the dilemma of the 1990s: If military spending is declining and deficits on the scale of the 1980s are no longer politically feasible, what is to prevent a return to the 1930s?

Paul M. Sweezy

ISHMAEL REED'S SCREED

Berkeley, Calif.

I continue to be amazed at Ishmael Reed's ability to turn my passing reference to his work—in my February 27, 1989, review of a book by Angela Davis—into an excuse to use *The Nation* as a forum for one more go at Alice Walker-bashing ["Letters," Oct. 16, 1989]. I have little to say about this strange pastime other than the obvious point that when Alice Walker and Audre Lorde disagree, it doesn't mean that Ishmael Reed is right. In a similar leap of bad faith Reed asserts that a focus on sexism is ipso facto racist, which is a gross caricature of the worst in dualistic thinking. By the same token, Reed's innuendoes notwithstanding, I have never seen it argued that Reed is misogynist because he is concerned about racism, or because he is African-American. Rather, it is Reed's misogyny that leads one to call him misogynist—sentences by Reed protagonists such as "a woman uses her cunt power to threaten and intimidate, even to blackmail. . . . The original blood-sucking vampire was a woman. . . . Your cunt is the most powerful weapon of any creature on this earth. . . . I can't understand why you want to be liberated. You already free. . . . We're the ones who are slaves: two-thirds of the men on skid row were driven there by their mothers, wives, daughters, their mistresses and their sisters." (Quoted from Reed's *The Last Days of Louisiana Red* by Darryl Pinckney, *The New York Review of Books*, Oct. 12, 1989.)

In his recent letter Reed pleads that he is a victim of Stanley Crouch's sloppy journalism, that in fact he never called Toni Morrison and Alice Walker "literary mammies." When Reed claimed that the first time, in 1982, Crouch responded that not only did Reed use the term "literary mammies" but that he later requested that it not be published, "that he hadn't intended to be quoted," and that "his use of it would get him 'in a lot of hot water.'"

I have refrained from responding in detail to the many other inaccuracies in Reed's letter because what's important about this exchange is not what Ishmael Reed and Jackie Stevens think of each other but how we may come to speak—with sensitivity and insight—about race and sexuality and class in the same breath, and it's something best done not in the vituperative pages of the *Nation* "Letters" column.

Jackie Stevens

DON'T CALL ISHMAEL

Berkeley, Calif.

From time to time writers are known to distort the truth in the service of an argument, but Ishmael Reed, in his October 16 letter to the editor, exceeds the boundaries of even the most mudslinging, acerbic debate. To put it bluntly—there is no other way to say it—he lies. Referring to an interview that appeared several months ago in the *East Bay Express*, Reed accuses me of describing men as "biological mutants." In fact, in what turned out to be a lengthy interview, I specifically disagree with biological determinism. I say that "nature doesn't produce evil; nature doesn't produce hatred; nature doesn't produce dominance." I point out that the argument of biological determinism has often been used to apologize for male dominance and violence. I point out that women, as well as men, have practiced sadomasochism, and that this should tell us that this behavior is not biologically linked to gender. I am critical of social Darwinism in general, and I point to social structure as a determinant of behavior. I say, to quote the interview again, "The question is, is this terrible system of dominance primarily biological? Of course it's affected by biology, but is that the primary etiology? I don't think so."

There is no possible way that Reed could have misread my opinion. Either he did not read the interview or he reported its contents falsely. In either case he lied, and I might add, he lied in a national publication. The implications of this mendacity spread beyond this publication. We are part of a community of the disenfranchised, concerned

(*Continued on Page 104*)

CORRECTION

The third full sentence on page 757 in Sanford Levinson's December 18, 1989, discussion of books about Robert Bork ["Law Without Justice"] should have read, "Although Black thought the Court could legitimately strike down legislation prohibited by specific constitutional text, he rejected constitutional claims in the absence of such text."

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EDITORIALS.

Home Brew

When terrorism came to America, it was supposed to wear a towel around its head, carry a hammer and sickle in its clenched fist, or do drugs—perhaps all at the same time. The ubiquitous terrorologists who haunt the political talk shows warned of Libyan hit squads, bloodthirsty Abu this and fanatic Abu that, Bulgarian pontifficides and vengeful Iranians carrying atom bombs in their carpetbags. The Colombian drug cartels were supposed to have targeted former New York Mayor Ed Koch, President Bush and other luminaries of the drug war.

But at last, when widespread terrorism did happen here—again—it appeared as American as pecan pie. No masked Arabs, crack-crazed Latins or sinister Reds, but the same old white-supremacist guys seem to be behind the bombings and threats against Federal judges, black activists and the N.A.A.C.P. that have terrorized the South in the past several weeks. The F.B.I. is still investigating, but evidence is growing that a deadly campaign has begun to punish and deter members of the judiciary and civil rights advocates who have pushed school desegregation, offended the Ku

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Klux Klan and respected the rights of blacks accused of assaults against whites.

A letter sent at year's end to an Atlanta television station claimed responsibility for the bombings by a hitherto unknown group called Americans for a Competent Federal Judicial System and implied the provocation was a decision by the Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit to implement a far-reaching desegregation plan for Georgia's DeKalb County. Judge Robert Vance, who was killed by a bomb on December 16, sat on the panel that approved the plan. The letter also cited the case of two black men accused of the rape and murder of a white woman in Georgia, and warned that every other such interracial assault would be met with a similar act of retaliation. No one doubts that the threats—and perhaps the murders—will continue.

For some reason, the bombings seem to have bothered very few people except those directly at risk. Perhaps the likelihood that good ol' Southern white men are involved somehow softens the category of International Terrorism, which relies heavily on race and ideology for its fearful force. But terror—in several forms—continues to be a very American problem, and its victims are precisely those who by race and ideology are supposed in media mythology to be the perpetrators.

Dumping on Us

No Federal agency has more eagerly protected a corrupt, bankrupt industry than the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. From its beginning in the mid-1970s, when it inherited the dubious mantle of the old Atomic Energy Commission, the N.R.C. has done all in its power to smooth the way for the pushers of atomic energy.

Now the N.R.C. may have outdone even itself. It is advocating a new set of regulations under the rubric "below regulatory concern," or B.R.C., that will exclude certain types of radioactive waste from special treatment.

What the commission wants to do, in essence, is fill neighborhood landfills with "low-level" atomic waste. With Reagan-Bush deregulatory zeal, it intends to allow commercial nuclear reactor operators to dump their "hot" trash in with the used diapers and cereal boxes of local citizens. The radioactive waste would enter the environment without documentation, without warning to the public and with no monitoring of the health of dump workers or nearby residents.

Congress laid the groundwork for this stunning scam in December 1985, when it ordered the N.R.C. to simplify procedures that enable nuclear power plants to have their wastes exempted from regulatory control. Eventually the commission wants to deregulate not only wastes from commercial nuclear power plants but those from 24,000 other licensed facilities, including weapons plants, experimental reactors and hospital and industrial facilities. Radioactive trash deemed below regulatory concern—about 30 percent of the total—would go into the local landfills and also into incinerators, sewage systems, recycling centers and sludge that is spread on farmland. In some cases it could find its way into consumer products such as kitchen appliances and children's toys.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that B.R.C. could save the nuclear industry $30 million or more annually. Diane D'Arrigo of the Nuclear Information Research Center in Washington, D.C., contends, however, that the program could cost the industry more in the long run, since fees for dumping radioactive waste not covered by B.R.C. deregulation in landfills licensed to receive it could skyrocket. At the very least B.R.C. could lift an immense burden from the nuclear weapons industry, whose site cleanup bill is currently estimated at anywhere from $100 billion to $500 billion.

That the program could add a horrendous radioactive dimension to the nightmare of accelerating ecological contamination doesn't faze the N.R.C., which is prepared to "fast track" the policy beginning as early as March. A third of this country's nuclear waste could be deregulated by summer.

Alerted to the danger, about fifty towns and counties have passed laws and resolutions against B.R.C. Maine has enacted a law requiring that all radioactive waste be stored or disposed of at licensed facilities. Fortunately for the opponents of B.R.C., the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's credibility is at an exceptionally low ebb. The nomination of its former executive director, Victor Stello, to head the nuclear weapons plant cleanup has provoked nationwide opposition [see Wasserman, "Stop Stello," October 9, 1989]. This month Representative Peter Kostmayer is investigating the N.R.C.'s handling of the bitterly contested operating license for the Seabrook nuclear power plant in New Hampshire. In November an N.R.C. appeals board rejected the evacuation plan for the controversial reactor. Two days later, however, a *lower* N.R.C. panel overruled its own appeals board, paving the way for the operating license, which the commissioners could issue within the month.

Such deadly shenanigans have made Congress increasingly uncomfortable with a regulatory commission Ralph Nader has labeled a "rogue agency." But can Congress bring sufficient pressure to keep the nuclear industry from dumping radioactive wastes in our backyards?

HARVEY WASSERMAN

Harvey Wasserman has been reporting on nuclear issues since 1973. He is the author of Harvey Wasserman's History of the United States *(Four Walls Eight Windows).*

Little War

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

U.S. backyard by shedding blood—at least twenty-four American soldiers and hundreds of Panamanian civilians died—all the while disregarding the world's opposition to the action.

Nineteen eighty-nine, like 1789, 1917, 1968 and other evocative dates of modern history, will be remembered because millions of people acted in ways that transformed the

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way we look at politics. In 1989 the myth on which Jeane Kirkpatrick built a second career—that Communist governments cannot be reformed or overthrown by their people—was confirmed as mere right-wing ideology. But the Bush Administration, while celebrating the democratic revolution in Eastern Europe, had so little faith in the people of Panama that it installed the elected government at gunpoint. In the process it made clear, as it had in the Philippines when U.S. planes scared off the plotters against Corazon Aquino, that the government was utterly dependent on American military power. It may be true, as news reports suggest, that all Panamanians except Noriega's henchmen are elated at being in U.S. receivership, but the memory of the invasion will feed anti-Americanism all over Latin America long after the former U.S. protégé is forgotten.

Members of Congress applauded this latest presidential war or elected to remain silent. Only Charles Rangel, Ted Weiss, Don Edwards and a few others dared to act like legislators and raise some of the legal, moral and practical objections that the news media almost totally ignored.

The network pundits and most editorial writers accepted Bush's premises justifying the Crusade for a Democratic and Drug-Free Hemisphere. The press told the American people once again that their nation was "standing tall," but the rest of the world believes that the spasm of violence in Panama indicates the reverse. The invasion did not impress the industrial nations with whom the United States will have to conduct its most important negotiations in the 1990s; the invasion was a show of impotence. Unable to use its still-considerable political and economic power in the hemisphere to get rid of a clever, outrageous con artist, the United States staged a blunderbuss attack with a heavy loss of civilian lives and property. Still remarkably passive and indecisive about the future arms levels and military arrangements it would like to see or about the future of Europe over which the nation fought two world wars, President Bush committed the power of the United States to a non-solution of a third-order problem. Even Richard Nixon thought it would have been better to let Noriega fall of his own weight.

This latest splendid little war will not help the United States in the crucial negotiations over the future of Europe that lie ahead. Gorbachev is struggling to redefine the meaning of being a great power; he understands that the basis of security in the 1990s is a strong economy and a productive and engaged society invigorated by democratic institutions. As the new decade opens it is not clear that he will succeed in making such a transition. The use of force by the United States is ammunition for the old-line Stalinist thinkers who believe that Soviet restraint feeds imperialist appetites. For twenty years the United States has been urging new rules of the game to limit superpower interventions. Improved relations between the United States and the Soviet Union appeared to herald at least the beginning of a new understanding that military interventions, including arms sales to warring Third World nations, produced more costs than benefits. The invasion was a blow to all this. Having taken on the responsibility, in the tradition of Woodrow Wilson, to teach the Panamanians to "elect good men," the United States is now stuck with policing the country. After spending billions in the 1980s on military operations in Central America, the United States is increasingly mired in a region that is a shambles.

But the greatest blows have been struck against the spirit of the new age waiting to be born. In Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union millions of people risked their lives for an idea—the rule of law. No man or woman could be free if government was run at the whim of one man and his cronies. While people were dying for this principle in Rumania, the nation that was once the symbol of modern democracy violated its own Constitution as well as international law. The strictures against unilateral intervention enshrined in U.S. treaties, including the United Nations Charter, are the supreme law of the land, according to our Constitution. Scarcely a bow was made to Congress's war-making powers. The Speaker of the House was informed, not consulted, less than three hours before the invasion began. The provisions in the Panama Canal treaty specifying that U.S. intervention is permitted only when the operation of the canal is endangered were ignored, for no evidence that the canal was threatened was presented.

In Communist countries governments were swept away because entrenched party bosses had destroyed the last shreds of legitimacy; their lies fed popular rage. People went into the streets because they could not stand to see their own histories disappear into the mists of Orwellian propaganda or to lose all touch with truth. Selling the operation in Panama required not just the usual bodyguard of lies but the proclamation of an imperial world view to a world that is moving toward the rejection of imperialism. The lawyerly lie that the United States was engaged in "self-defense" against Panama, the suggestion that the United States has a writ to avenge one American life by risking the lives of thousands more, and the fantasy that this burst of war will make a dent in the drug problem undermine the credibility, the power and the security of the United States.

Behind the hollow rhetoric used to justify the invasion is a President stung by the charge of having been outwitted by a tinhorn dictator. Like Lyndon Johnson, George Bush has let a personal obsession dictate American foreign policy. Anthony Eden's obsession with Gamal Abdel Nasser in the 1950s led to the disastrous invasion of Suez and marked the end of the British Empire. It is characteristic of aging empires to act out the obsessions of frustrated leaders, but the historical precedents suggest that this is not a good way to arrest the processes of decline. In 1989 the United States missed the chance to show the world that it too understands the changed nature of national security. In the 1990s a nation cannot be strong by preparing for or fighting wars, even small ones, but by building a productive economy and democratic institutions grounded in law and respect for truth.

Richard. J. Barnet's latest book is The Rockets' Red Glare: When America Goes to War—The Presidents and The People *(Simon and Schuster).*

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Timisoara, Transylvania, Rumania

Nothing prepares you for a place like Timisoara; nothing, that is, except the collective memory of our beautiful century. The people of this city were strafed from the air like the inhabitants of Guernica. They were executed in heaps like the wretches of Babi Yar. They were dumped in mass graves in the forest like the victims of Katyn. Some of them were raped and mutilated like the villagers of My Lai. It will be small consolation to their surviving friends and families to think that they were the final carnage of the last of the modern European megalomaniacs. Yet it is possible to believe that they do possess this melancholy honor.

It hit me as I went walking down a hospital basement corridor with Dr. Istvan Balos and noticed that the soles of my shoes were getting tacky. To glance down and see the floor darkened with fairly fresh blood, and to find this disgusting fact remarkable, was to betray oneself as a newcomer to town. For days after the *Walpurgisnacht* conducted by Nicolae Ceausescu's secret police, the morgues and cemeteries of Timisoara were the main social and cultural venues. Every image of every pogrom and death squad—from the disemboweled mother-to-be to the acid-drenched unknown civilian—was present. The gates of the hospital were a scene of dulled, semi-expectant misery, evinced by those who both did and did not wish to know what had become of their loved ones.

There is also the question of the hated ones. Caligula once said that he wished the Roman mob had only one neck, so that he could decapitate the whole lot with a single stroke. Public opinion in Timisoara forms a kind of obverse. Everybody wishes that they could have had a turn at killing the Caligula of Rumania ("Our first merry Christmas," as Dr. Balos put it to me unsmilingly). This is the sort of intense loathing that comes from fear and humiliation, and from the nightmare of living under the Securitate, the black-uniformed bodyguard of a regime of voluptuous cruelty and corruption. I swore to eschew Transylvanian cliché, but it is true that the people of this province had to *see* Ceausescu's corpse on television before they would dare to believe it was all over. Their bloodsucking, bloodletting king had to be pierced with a stake. The action also helped smash the morale of the remaining Securitate gangs. This needs to be set down in fairness, even if more and more Rumanians and Hungarians are now rightly having second thoughts about the panicky and arbitrary decision to dispense with a public trial.

It was a privilege to witness the end of Ceausescu's monarchist-Leninist terror, and to watch the classic scenes of soldiers embracing civilians, and children giving the V salute. It was even more of a privilege to cross the suddenly opened border to Hungary with a relief convoy organized by Hungarian democrats and dissidents. In the past the authorities in both countries had employed the "threat" of the other to instill discipline and to keep alive pre-Communist national resentments over the ownership of Transylvania. Yet here were the towns of Arad and Timisoara, and every village along the way, greeting Hungarians as brothers and sisters. And here were Hungarians bringing food and medicine to be distributed not just to members of their "own" ethnic minority but to all Rumanians without discrimination. I'm not going to forget standing in the street, in a throng of Rumanian soldiers and truck drivers and shoppers, helping to pass out free copies of the Hungarian Communist Party paper *Nepszabadsag* ("People's Freedom"), which had been brought over the border by activists who had just defeated that same party in a democratic referendum. (Any newspaper was considered better than none in a city with no press.)

In the wake of the utter deliquescence of Stalinism, there are those who mutter gloomily about a return to the old prewar atavistic politics. There's nothing frivolous about this concern. But it's essential to remember that the Stalinist system itself helped keep those problems festering. While the Hungarian minority in Transylvania was living under Ceausescu's cultural and political repression, any demagogue could pose as its spokesman abroad. Now, as George Konrad put it to me back in Budapest, the minority can speak in its own voice without any self-appointed envoy. "And this will have an effect on the whole *tone* of Hungarian national feeling." On Rumanian feeling too; under Ceausescu it would have been impossible for an ethnic Hungarian such as Father Laszlo Tokes to be invited to join the Cabinet. The condition for a solution to the national question, in other words, is democracy. What greater condemnation of the *ancien régime* could there be than that it relegated the first while denying the second?

The democratic opposition in Hungary, most especially the Alliance of Free Democrats, is decidedly opposed to any change in frontiers. Those who hint of a "Greater Hungary" and who distrust the Jews and the gypsies and the intellectuals are not exactly absent from the picture. Yet they have lost rather than gained from the Rumanian revolution. In the context of a modernized, unifying Europe, their voice sounds anachronistic. The problem of chauvinism will remain for the future, but as Bulgaria has just shown by reversing its shameful anti-Turkish campaign, and as the Charter 77 forces have shown by refusing to persist with Gustav Husak's policy of pitting Czechs against Slovaks, the old system was more often the cause of those problems than the cure.

Until last month there was only one mad despot in Europe left raving from his balcony; one regime with a diseased cult of the ruling family, a drilled "youth movement," an addiction to torchlight and applause. Ceausescu received an honorary knighthood from the Queen of England, praise from George Bush and the indulgence of the international banks, as well as the Order of Lenin from Moscow and lavish solicitude from both Israel and the Arab League. It was left to the population of this little-known city to cleanse the country and give real content to the slogans of democracy and internationalism that such complicity had defiled.

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ARTICLES.

CHINA AFTER TIANANMEN

It's a Whole New Class Struggle

ANITA CHAN AND
JONATHAN UNGER

Hong Kong

National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft's most recent clandestine trip to Beijing on behalf of President Bush delicately ignored the terrible underside of post-June Chinese politics—the waves of arrests that have punctuated life in urban China over this past half year. Ironically, Scowcroft's latest visit came at the height of the largest wave of detentions since August. The signal to Communist Party hard-liners in China was clear: The White House is willing to turn a blind eye to renewed mass jailings, and Beijing need not fear retaliatory international sanctions.

Of particular irony, Scowcroft's timing may not have been entirely to Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's advantage. Ever since June the perpetrators of the Beijing massacre have been caught up in internal disputes over how severe the purges of dissidents ought to be. Deng and his immediate allies are using the less bellicose rhetoric in an effort to reduce the number of arrests. The reason is clear. Deng's power has been weakened by the events of the past year, and any wider purges would weaken him further.

Deng never stood above the other veteran party leaders like a colossus, as Mao did. Deng's political supremacy this past decade has rested instead on his adroitness in balancing the two wings of the leadership: a reform side represented by, among others, Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, and a more conservative side including most of the octogenarian leaders, whose spokesman in the younger generation has been Prime Minister Li Peng. By splitting with Hu and Zhao over questions of political liberalization and student demonstrations, Deng has cut off one of the two wings. This has left him more at the mercy of the party's conservative wing, which is frustrating his efforts to keep his program of economic restructuring on the drawing board.

Deng was given a bad fright by the challenge to party hegemony posed by the Tiananmen Square protests, and perhaps more than any other man he holds responsibility for the massacre that ensued. But he also knows that the intellectuals and professionals are the main constituency favoring his economic reforms. Over the past forty years, in one campaign of repression after another, their ranks have been thinned by the tens and hundreds of thousands. Until November, several weeks before Scowcroft's visit, a few thousand had been swept into the prisons. Most of these had played direct roles as leaders or counselors in last spring's street politics.

Deng and his immediate entourage have, as part of their strategy, sought to keep Zhao from being charged as the leader of an "antiparty conspiracy." Such an accusation would allow the more conservative wing of the party to mount a broader witch hunt in important government offices against the allies and acolytes of Zhao. Their fall would seal the fate of the various economic programs that bear the imprint of both Zhao and Deng.

The net result is that the campaign of repression against intellectuals has moved forward in fits and starts, with arrests coming in sporadic waves. The first major crackdown came in June and was revived for a few weeks in late summer. Within the past two months, the hard-liners appear to have gained the upper hand once more. Starting shortly after Deng formally resigned as chair of the party's Central Military Commission, a new wave of arrests swept Beijing, Shanghai and other cities. Some of the intelligentsia who thought they had escaped the net of repression are now finding themselves in detention after all. The fate of many others undoubtedly will hinge on whether the conservatives or Deng's protégés, such as the new Party Secretary, Jiang Zemin, prevail in the infighting at the top.

By contrast, the party leadership is united in an urgent desire to root out all the workers who sought to establish independent political unions last spring. The old men of Zhongnanhai, China's Kremlin, have always been more afraid of worker discontent and dissident worker organizations than student disturbances or intellectual dissent. For years the party has tended to tolerate student demonstrations up to the point when workers join in. When the student demonstrations at the end of 1986, for example, began to attract throngs of workers as onlookers, they were speedily quelled. In 1989 the agitation grew so quickly that the party elders, caught off guard, were not able to nip it in the bud. Now they are determined to make sure that autonomous worker activity does not survive the events of last spring. From June onward, in the outer rim of Beijing, where state factories and workers' dormitories are located, and where workers had maintained twenty-four-hour vigils and roadblocks in May and June against incoming soldiers, large numbers of workers have been arbitrarily apprehended and sometimes badly beaten to secure information on their springtime activities. Students and intellectuals normally have not been subjected to such beatings. Similarly, no executions of students or intellectuals have been announced, whereas several dozen working-class "hooligans" have been executed with great fanfare. The police and the courts observe class distinctions.

The coalition of student and worker protesters last spring was not of the students' making. Up until the very end of the

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two-month protest movement the students had disdainfully tried to keep the workers at arm's length. For one thing, the intellectuals and students generally are not sympathetic to working-class problems. Indeed, the intellectuals have regularly complained in print in recent years that their own salaries are insufficiently higher than those of the workers. Moreover, they find themselves on opposite sides of the fence regarding the economic reform program. The intellectuals and students generally have supported it, while workers have worried that the reforms will mean the end of job security. Partial layoffs—for example, paying workers half their normal salary to stay home—have been widely used by managers of state enterprises to cut down on overstaffing. To the workers the reforms also mean high inflation, tighter control over work schedules, rising production quotas at work and even the possibility of enterprise bankruptcy and unemployment.

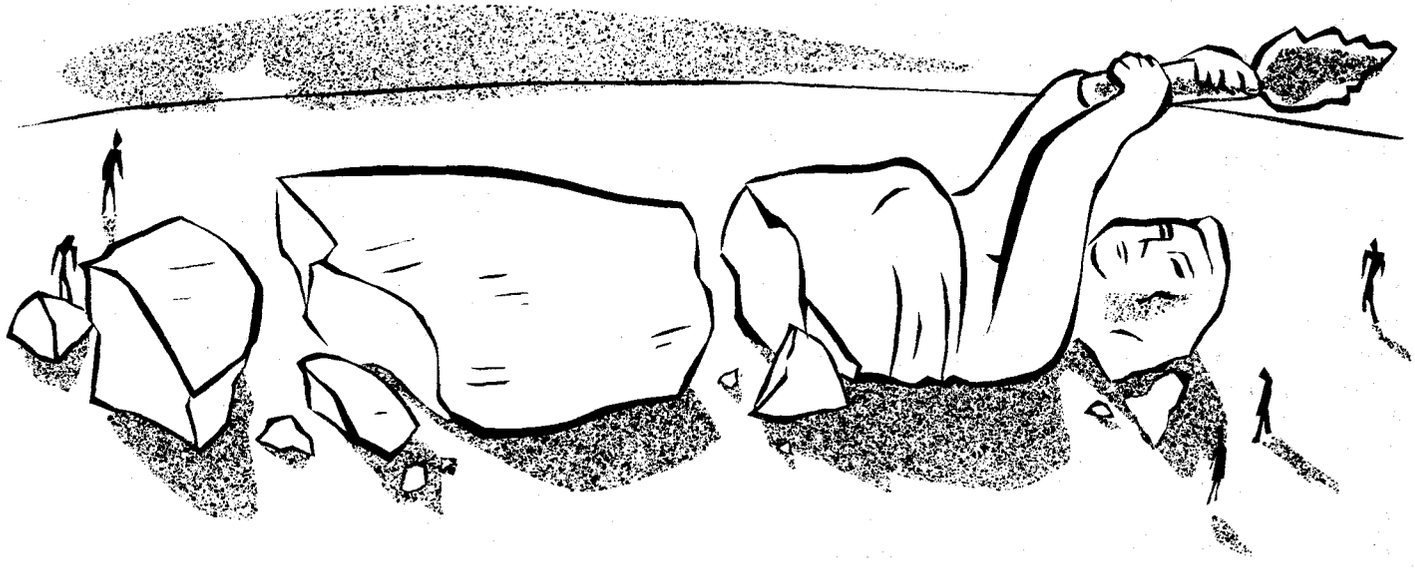
In past years workers had been willing to tolerate the corruption of officials as long as their own incomes rose steadily. But with inflation now sapping their earnings, workers have begun to resent strongly the nepotism and illicit gains of bureaucrats at all levels. This anger at inflation and corruption united students, intellectuals and workers alike last spring, but as the Chinese saying goes, they were "sleeping in the same bed dreaming different dreams." It was a tenuous front, with workers providing support but receiving little in return. Whereas dissident Polish intellectuals had begun to make common cause with workers by the mid-1970s, Chinese intellectuals and students have little patience with them even after the events of last spring. In September, when dissidents who had escaped from China gathered in Paris to hammer out a common platform—one that advocates democracy, a multiparty system and private ownership—they didn't mention issues of social justice until two student delegates from the United States pointed out the lapse.

Besides outrage at inflation and corruption, the other unifying element in last spring's protests was the demand for democracy, a cry that won widespread support from all classes. To the protesters, the word meant above all freedom from the petty and arbitrary controls that the leaders of Chinese work units and schools still exercise over so many facets of life. But the intellectual community was divided over the other meaning of democracy: a government based on popular vote. As China's economy and social order began to seem increasingly chaotic in the late 1980s, a strong intellectual current began to voice its support for a "new authoritarianism."

This new authoritarianism puts a premium on orderly economic modernization. Its proponents believe this can be achieved only through an autocratic helmsmanship that keeps competing interests in line. Political democracy is put forward as a long-term goal, to be postponed until the economic underpinnings and social structure of a modern prosperous state are in place. The new authoritarianism openly looks for inspiration to the Four Little Dragons of Asia—South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong—all of which have attained prosperity without democracy. Marx and Lenin are rarely mentioned by its advocates; they have abandoned any pretense that Marxist ideas or phraseology retain credibility in China today. They recognize that a new ideological prop is needed to legitimize one-party rule and the supremacy of a single autocrat, and they look to conservative Western modernization theorists to provide their ideological ammunition. If they have a guru, it is Samuel Huntington of Harvard; their conceptualization of the new authoritarianism derives largely from his writings.

Among the major proponents of this new authoritarianism are several prominent intellectuals close to Zhao Ziyang, and the concept has come under attack since June as a "bourgeois" import. As *People's Daily* wrote in an October editorial:

> The so-called "new authoritarianism" put forward by some of the members of Comrade Zhao Ziyang's think tanks basically dissociates the reforms from the working class and the broad masses of people who actually constitute the basis of the reforms. Instead, these advisors called for the emergence of a middle class, i.e. a new bourgeoisie, to



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become the pillar of their so-called "reform.". . . Their so-called "modernization" is really Westernization, and Comrade Zhao Ziyang is tacitly the "new authoritarian" who would guide us into this Westernization.

While rebuffing the new authoritarianism, the party hard-liners are turning back to the old authoritarianism they spent most of their careers upholding. They are making an explicit appeal to the industrial working class, an appeal steeped in the class-based language of the Maoist era, with its rhetoric of dictatorship of the proletariat and its fulminations against counterrevolutionaries. Newspaper propaganda is currently trying to play upon workers' resentment of the decline of their social status since Mao's death, dislike of the intellectuals who make no secret of their disdain for workers and fears about the impact of the economic reforms. *Workers' Daily* has been editorializing—on the face of it, fairly—that Zhao Ziyang and his followers exhibit scant concern for working-class anxieties.

In particular, efforts are being made today to woo the work force at the large state-run factories in the major cities. The current campaign of economic retrenchment is designed to bring down the high inflation that has so aggravated the state-sector urban workers. They, more than others, are now to be protected; layoffs are hurting primarily the factory workers in the collective and private sectors, particularly in small cities and rural areas.

Having been blamed by protesters for turning a blind eye to blatant corruption and to increasing economic and social chaos, the party is also making vigorous efforts to regain its long-lost image among the working classes as the upholder of morality and law. Alongside the political purge, it is mounting a highly publicized crackdown on soft-core pornography, prostitution, gambling and the much-despised petty corruption of small-time private vendors. In a clever strategic move, common criminals and degenerates are being lumped together with political dissidents. But as in all the other anticorruption campaigns of the 1980s, no big fish have yet been sacrificed to allay popular anger.

Even so, the various efforts to garner working-class support are likely to meet with some success in the short term. The divergence of interests and attitudes between the industrial class and the students and intellectuals is, after all, palpable. But the strategy is not likely to be enough to win any lasting peace for the party's hard-liners. Disillusionment with the party is too widespread among younger workers, and revulsion against the massacre of last June is too deep to give the hard-liners much chance of building a new mass base.

If the students and their mentors take stock of their own failures and begin to reach out to working-class interests, they may have a good chance of bringing workers into the streets once again when the moment is ripe. Much of China expects such an explosion within the next three to five years, once most of the octogenarians who today control the country have died.

The outcome next time might be different, but even so hopes should not be raised too high. As of now, the proponents of the new authoritarianism would stand a good chance of inheriting the throne. □

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OLD SOUTH VS. THE NEW

More Than a Football Game

COLIN SOLOWAY

Herald of a new decade, 1990 nevertheless began as every year begins in America, with football. Amid the pageantry of the college bowl games and the mammoth hype leading up to the Super Bowl, a new sheaf of stories is being added to the enduring mythology of the game. But this season one of the most compelling stories was also among the most obscure. After seventy seasons of play in what remain segregated conferences of the N.C.A.A.'s Division 1AA, the Bulldogs of the Citadel Military College of South Carolina finally met the Bulldogs of South Carolina State College. It was the first time that the Citadel, self-declared defender of Southern tradition, had shared the field or the stands with the athletes and supporters of a predominantly black college. The two schools, only an hour's drive apart, represent alternate sides of the Southern coin, and this contest and the issues and attitudes surrounding it, a telling chapter in the continuing story of the "New South."

I went to the capital city of Columbia, to Williams-Brice Stadium, in the wake of Hurricane Hugo to watch these two football teams contend. The game was originally to be held on the Citadel's home turf in Charleston, but on September 21 Hugo came ashore, leaving the stadium in ruins and causing the city to be placed under martial law for the first time since its occupation by Union forces in 1865. Like much else in the South, this contest would carry faint echoes of the war, of Reconstruction, of their subtle and not-so-subtle effects on personal relations and public habits.

According to legend the cadets of the Citadel fired both the first and last shots of the Civil War. Founded in 1842 as a training academy for state militia officers, the school was named for its first home, a fortress built to defend against slave revolts in what was then the largest slave marketplace in America and later became the cradle of secession. When reopened in the waning years of Reconstruction, the Citadel set about turning generations of white male South Carolinians into "whole men" through a routine of harsh discipline and a reverence for antebellum traditions. It was during Reconstruction that the Citadel embraced the flag of the Confederacy and the rebel battle song "Dixie" as symbols of its glorious past and its resistance to Northern domination.

In Columbia, as Citadel fans entered the stadium in their sky-blue windbreakers, the Stars and Bars could be spotted in pockets, under arms and emblazoned on seat cushions. Weeks before the game the expectation of such displays had caused concern among members of South Carolina's black community, not least because recent times have brought the Citadel a dubious notoriety. In 1986 the school was enmeshed in an $880,000 lawsuit filed by the N.A.A.C.P. on behalf of a black cadet, Kevin Nesmith, who charged five white upperclassmen with racial harassment (in the form of a mock Ku Klux Klan ceremony in his bedroom) and officers of the Citadel with encouraging "overt racial prejudice" by not expelling the five. Nesmith resigned from the Citadel soon after the incident, saying he had suffered further harassment for having filed complaints. Despite the recommendation of the state Human Affairs Commission that the Citadel dramatically increase minority enrollment, the number of African-Americans has remained static at 6 percent of the 2,000-man cadet corps. Counting pictures in the athletic department's press guide, I found thirty-eight blacks among the Citadel's 117-man football squad: about 33 percent of the team, and 33 percent of all black cadets enrolled. Citadel officials would provide no information on the relative proportion of minority and athletic scholarships.

Up in the Citadel stands the cadets, dressed mostly in civilian clothes, oxford and rugby shirts, were easy to identify by their crew cuts. Blacks and whites spoke of their school with enthusiasm—"When everyone's getting abused, no matter what color you are," joked one black cadet, "you're the same"—but they sat largely apart. The sister of a black cadet on the football team told me that a year ago her brother had been accused of cheating on an exam, an offense punishable by immediate expulsion. When brought before an honor court he was found innocent, and the court ruled that the two white cadets accusing him had been motivated by racism. "There's always going to be racism anywhere you go," a recent Citadel graduate named Rivers said. "I've taken my share at the Citadel, but I've got a good education and a good job too."

Only about 50 percent of those who wear the Citadel ring enter the military, and the notion that the school is a training ground for leadership lives on as long as its graduates continue to occupy South Carolina's antebellum mansions, its corporate board rooms and the chambers of its Statehouse. In the black community, however, State College has traditionally been looked to for leadership, educating the poor and middle class and producing a fair proportion of South Carolina's black professionals. Integration, such as it is, was achieved relatively peacefully in South Carolina, but in 1968 State College was the scene of a confrontation stemming from protests against a segregated bowling alley during which state police forces opened fire on a crowd of unarmed students, killing three and wounding twenty-seven.

Like the other Southern land-grant colleges established during the 1890s to prevent blacks from attending state universities by providing "separate but equal" institutions, State College is known as a historically black school and remains 92 percent black. It is a charter member of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, which is made up of other historically black colleges throughout the Southeast and Middle Atlantic states, such as Howard, Florida A&M and North Carolina A&T, where Jesse Jackson played football in the early 1960s. Black schools play black schools in the M.E.A.C., and whites play other whites in the Southern

Colin Soloway is a writer living in North Carolina.

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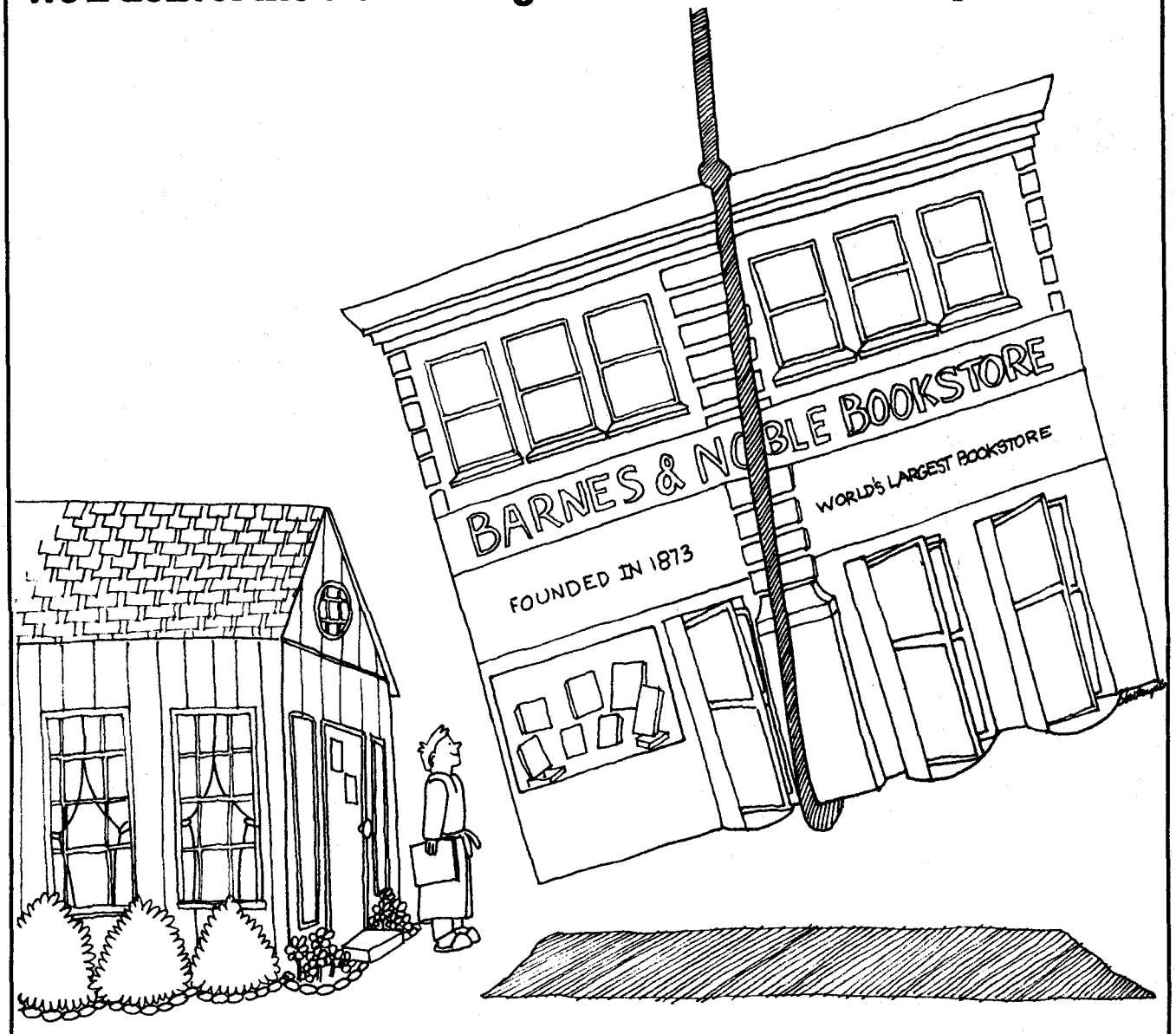

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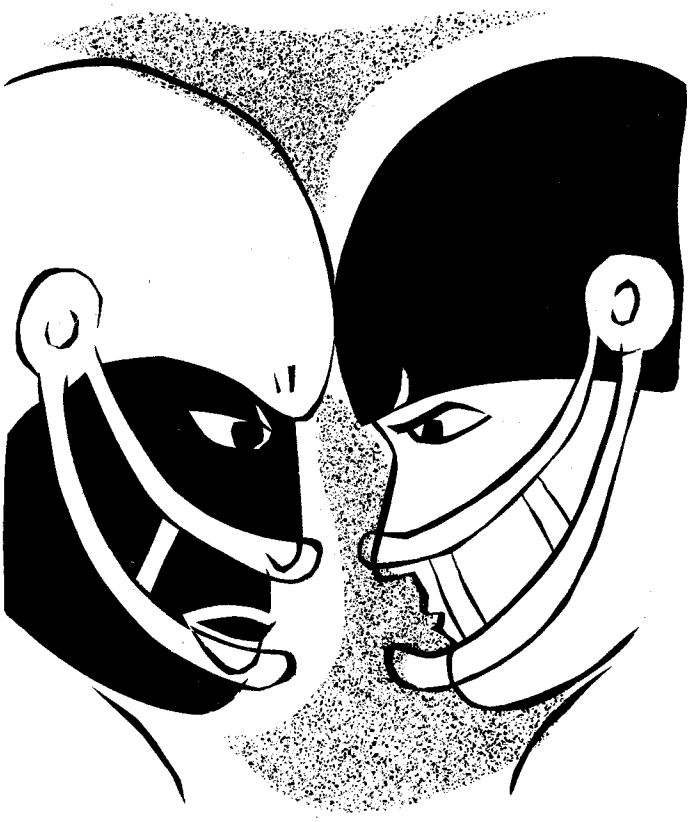
Conference, of which the Citadel is a charter member. Although the conference color lines dictate that teams must travel inordinately long distances outside the state to play their nearest competitors, neither conference has yet sought to integrate.

Nevertheless, for ten years the State College Bulldogs challenged the Citadel to play them in football, and for ten years the Citadel declined, claiming scheduling difficulties and budgetary considerations. For most of those years State College had a powerful team while the Citadel was experiencing one of the weakest periods in its history. But with State coming off a losing record for four out of the last five seasons and the Citadel having markedly improved, the moment must have seemed right for the cadets to accept State's challenge. Bill Hamilton, sports information director at State, said, "In the past, I'm sure the possibility of losing to a black team played a part in Citadel's decision not to play."

The Citadel agreed to this game on the condition that it be played in Charleston, and at first offered State College only 2,000 seats in the 22,500-seat stadium. Faced with huge demands from State College fans, the Citadel relented, offering to split the number of tickets evenly. But now in Columbia, State College supporters outnumbered those of the Citadel. The State College grandstands were a wall of garnet and blue, and from the first play, when the State College Bulldogs returned the Citadel Bulldogs' kickoff, it promised to be an exciting game. It wasn't long before flags of the Confederacy began to unfurl in the Citadel's stands.

Among the white cadets there were some carrying hip flasks, and the smell of bourbon hung in the air. I asked a group of cadets why they were waving the flags, which they had kept folded under their arms until an exciting play occurred. They burst out, "'Cause it's a part of our history,



and has been for—well, a real long time, for over a hundred years anyway. It's a symbol of our school. We don't fly it to be racist, to be disrespectful or, or offend them. This is our symbol. Why can't they [blacks] respect it as our symbol? If we didn't like their school colors, or something like that, we couldn't tell them what to do."

Neither their fellow cadets who were black nor the families of the black cadets on the field appeared to be waving the flag. The white cadets spoke of their many close friends who are black but said they had never talked about the flag with these friends, had never asked whether it was offensive.

"They could be offended if they take it the wrong way," said one white cadet, "but we don't mean it that way, to be racial. Because the Citadel ain't racist. Since that hazing stuff we have a lot of meetings on race sensitivity, and we watch movies—I can't remember what they were called, but they were about race—and we talk about them."

A cadet company commander from Charleston told me, "In all the years I've been here, as a cadet and as a cadet officer, I've never come across any racism or racist acts." Later he remarked that he had known personally one of the five cadets charged with the Klan-style harassment, a Mr. Bostwick, and pronounced him "one of the greatest guys I know; he wasn't a racist, and that stuff wasn't meant in a racist way."

At just about that moment the Citadel, trailing 7–3, scored its first touchdown of the game. As the teams set up for the extra point, a song rose from the crowd:

> I wish I was in the land of cotton,
> Old times there are not forgotten,
> Look away! look away! look away, Dixie Land.

The white men in the stands stood and lifted their hats, as though for an anthem. Confederate flags waved furiously. Black cadets and families sat silently, eyes on the field.

"I was raised to hate that flag and that song," said one black cadet, "but I'm not here to make trouble, I'm here to get an education, and I'm not going to let those things stand in my way." But as one cadet told the state Human Affairs Commission, "There isn't anyone here [among black cadets] who wishes he was in the 'land of cotton.'"

Before it was taken as the rebel battle song, "Dixie" was a minstrel show tune, written by a white man in 1859 for other whites in blackface to sing about the happiness of slave life in the South. The traditional deployment of flag and song became an issue in this game soon after the date was announced, when Charleston City Council member Robert Ford called on the Citadel to suspend the use of both symbols, arguing that to do otherwise would be seen as "blatant disrespect to the black community." The game, he said, is the "type of activity that can either unite the black and white communities or drive the stake that separates the two even deeper." The Citadel's president, Gen. Claudius Watts 3d, and his officers refused to comment on Ford's request and, according to Col. William Legare, the school's public relations director, they gave no order or recommendation to their cadets or supporters. But one conspicuous and, I was told, rare absence was that of the Bulldog Orchestra, the Citadel's marching band. Officials explained that with classes disrupted because of the hurricane, the band had

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been unable to assemble. Yet the Citadel had managed to muster not only the football team and support staff but the cheerleading squad as well. In any case, by its absence the band avoided having to lead the fans in "Dixie" while facing some 17,000 black fans just across the field.

At halftime, its team having dominated the play and leading 20–17, the State College 101 marching band provided the show. The drummers laid down a heavy funk beat while the other musicians and drum majors danced, going through full step routines, facing not their fans but the Citadel grandstands. The Citadel crowd was mesmerized. At first the whites seemed uncertain how to react, but then they roared with applause that was louder than when their team had scored. Colonel Dick, the commandant of the Citadel's corps, turned to the cadets around him and shouted, laughing, "Why don't you do that? Why doesn't our band do that?"

When the play resumed there was an intensity in the State College grandstands that was beyond the normal Southern football religiosity. Thomas Stewart, assistant to the president of the college, had told me prior to the game, "We don't care about their rebel flags and we don't care if they sing 'Dixie.' We just want to get them down on the field and whip their asses in football." But as the tide turned against State College in the third quarter with the Citadel pulling ahead after two interceptions, the prospect of victory looked increasingly unlikely.

I noticed that the majority of the State College spectators were not students; they were in their 30s and 40s, or older. And there amid the garnet and the blue, I also spotted a single white uniform. First-year Citadel "knob" from Charleston Daron Wesselhoft sat in the State College stands, but he rooted for the Citadel. "My brother used to play for State and a lot of my friends go here, but next year I'll be playing linebacker for Citadel."

He was with a friend from Morris College, a small, predominantly black private school. "Most kids probably look on this as just another football game," the friend said, "nothing more, really. But my mom and her friends, I heard them saying how they wanted to get here early to get good seats. They've been talking about the game all week. I've never seen them so worked up about a football game. I suppose it's more than that to them, to older folks."

One of those older spectators was State Senator Kay Patterson, chair of the South Carolina legislative black caucus. For the past fourteen years he has led the campaign in the Legislature to remove the flag of the Confederacy that still flies above the Statehouse. And for the past fourteen years conservatives have blocked his efforts, claiming that the flag is not offensive but is taken the "wrong way" by blacks. "In South Carolina," he said, "it shows that we've come a long way to have a game with a predominantly Afro-American school against a predominantly white school. But the flag-waving and 'Dixie' negate the whole spirit of the game, that we can get along and be honest and open with each other. The powers-that-be responsible for the school [the Citadel] have not taken a stand on it, and that is sad."

When the Citadel put the game away with another touchdown, sealing its victory 31–20, Cadet Wesselhoft cheered. But from the rest in the State College stands there came a deep sigh. As the final seconds flickered off the scoreboard, the Citadel stands surged, and dozens of rebel flags whipped back and forth wildly. A faint chorus of "Dixie" floated across the field.

The State College 101 played the school song slowly, like a dirge. The cheerleaders stood straight, with their heads lowered and their right hands balled into fists and held in the air, as the black athletes at the Mexico City Olympics had done in 1968. The older members of the crowd, those who remembered 1968, rose and raised their fists and sang, or stood silently until the music ended. Then they turned to leave. □

PUERTO RICO'S FUTURE STATUS

Prisoners of Many Myths

ANTONIO M. STEVENS-ARROYO

Except for winter vacation reservations, about the only time Puerto Rico emerges in ordinary conversation is at a time of disaster. If Hurricane Hugo is not enough, then the news media wait for nationalists to explode a bomb somewhere, or for the rare occasion when Washington turns its attentions to the "Puerto Rican problem."

Puerto Rico became a U.S. possession in 1898, after the Spanish-American War. Since 1952 the island has been a "commonwealth," a status that allowed its inhabitants to remain U.S. citizens but permitted home rule for some 3.3 million islanders. But a referendum on the status issue is due to be held this year. George Bush, like Gerald Ford before him, has renewed the on-again, off-again Republican Party quest to make Puerto Rico the fifty-first state. And although from Washington's perspective this effort amounts to little more than two sentences in last January's State of the Union message, the prospect of a status change upsets the island's political system every bit as much as the hurricane destroyed its tropical tranquillity.

Unfortunately, debate about the status issue gets stalled in disputes over what is fact and what is fiction. The major problem can be traced to self-insulating interpretations of Puerto Rico's relationship with the United States, which borrow more from ideology than history. These interpretations are what Joseph Campbell probably would call "myths"—emotionally charged stories of the struggle for meaning and significance.

For instance, on July 25 every year Puerto Rico divides into three tribes. Those in favor of the present common-

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wealth status commemorate with parades and speeches the constitution that has governed relations with the United States since 1952. Those in favor of independence recall the 1898 invasion by U.S. troops on the same day and gather at the southern coast town of Guánica to denounce *yanqui* imperialism. Those in favor of making Puerto Rico a state of the Union take the day off and go to the beach, figuring that they celebrated their country's independence on the Fourth of July. July 25 illustrates how the lack of a common political myth divides the Puerto Rican people.

For the independence advocates, virtually all evils and suffering in Puerto Rico past and present are rooted in the 1898 invasion. Greed, racism and imperialist militarism have characterized the U.S. regime there ever since. The native *borinqueños* are pictured by the *independentistas* as rebellious patriots subdued time and again by the crushing might of the Colossus of the North.

Unfortunately, although there is recurrent proof of U.S. exploitation, the harshness of the *independentista* myth and the abundance of consumer goods that has resulted from the U.S. presence has limited the appeal of the *independentistas*, who are supported by a steady but unimpressive 6 percent of the electorate. When *independentista* leaders soften their anti-U.S. rhetoric to gain plausibility as a political alternative, they lose their most committed supporters.

Nonetheless, both the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) and the smaller Puerto Rican Socialist Party have earned a generous measure of respect for incorruptibility. Independence supporters can be found on virtually every town council on the island. In the past two islandwide elections, at-large senators from PIP have obtained a record-setting number of popular votes. They use the Legislature as a forum for denunciations of the "politics as usual" practiced by other parties.

Despite its shallow electoral support, the independence movement has effectively instilled a current of Puerto Rican nationalism into island life. Popular culture projects a love of Puerto Rico as a *patria*. Statehooders prefer not to clash head-on with this nationalist mythology; instead, they try to co-opt it. Former Governor Carlos Romero Barceló argued, for instance, that even as a state Puerto Rico could have its own Olympic teams. At the Pan-American Games held in Puerto Rico during his term, he found himself in the absurd position of cheering for the Puerto Rican basketball team in the first half of the decisive contest and in the second half rooting for the United States. Instead of pleasing both sides, Romero satisfied neither.

A similar fuzziness accompanies the statehood stance on how to keep Spanish, not English, as the official language, and on how to continue the generous exemptions of Section 936 of the Federal tax code if the island becomes a state. The statehood myth maintains that there is no such thing as Puerto Rican nationality. During its twelve years in power from 1968 to 1972 and from 1976 to 1984, the pro-statehood administration avoided the expression "Puerto Rican people," substituting the cumbersome phrase, "the U.S. citizens resident in Puerto Rico." Statehooders attacked the "Institute of Puerto Rican Culture," and instead used government funds for a "Puerto Rican Institute of Culture" in order, as they put it, to promote "world" culture instead of "provincial" Puerto Rican folklore.

For the statehooders, the invasion of 1898 was a liberation from Spanish backwardness. If there are problems in Puerto Rico, they say, it is because the people are not Americanized enough. Poverty and racism against Puerto Ricans in the United States are portrayed as the effects of clinging to a Latino identity. For its advocates, statehood would give Puerto Ricans political representation as a minority group within the most powerful country in the world, certainly preferable to being masters of one's own house.

The statehooders project their machismo via a virulent anticommunism. Full assimilation into the Union as a state is necessary, they say, to prevent the island from falling prey to communists. Seeing every *independentista* as a potential anti-American terrorist, the pro-statehood Romero administration routinely placed the name of every registered PIP voter on a list of some 74,000 subversives. With generous financial support from the right-wing anti-Castro Cuban community in Puerto Rico, the statehooders have drunk deeply at the wells of fanaticism, cooperating with the F.B.I. in some questionable counterintelligence operations, including the 1978 shooting of two young *independentistas* at Cerro Maravilla. The statehooders' glorification of American military might has earned them the approval of U.S. conservatives.

Ironically, however, the populist base of statehood rests upon the social welfare programs of the liberal tradition of the stateside Democratic Party. The statehooders have gained much political mileage in the past twenty years by calling for massive welfare benefits for the island. The infusion of Federal funds has had a major impact, with fully 50 percent of

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the people qualifying for food stamps. This dependency on largesse from the Federal treasury is presented as a virtue. The statehooders claim that it is a tribute to the greatness of the United States, and becoming a state would mean that such welfare becomes a "right rather than charity," according to leaders of the Republican National Hispanic Assembly. Only about 20 percent of Puerto Ricans would earn enough to pay Federal income taxes, while the remainder would be dependent on some form of benefits. Former Governor Romero said in his book, *Statehood Is for the Poor*, that the island would take billions more out of the Federal treasury than it would put in. (This is the bottom line statehooders try not to mention when in Washington.)

For all its contradictions, the statehood myth carries the seduction of dependency. Like a hospital patient on a life-support system, Puerto Rico's economy has become dependent on subsidies. United States citizenship has also become a sacred cow, largely because virtually every Puerto Rican has family stateside and the people are accustomed to frequent travel between the island and the continent. Even the *independentistas* talk about some sort of dual citizenship for the proposed Puerto Rican republic.

The commonwealth advocates try to mix and match from what they see as two opposing extremist groups. From the *independentistas* they borrow the sense of Puerto Rican nationality. Avoiding statehood has enabled tiny Puerto Rico to maintain its language and culture, they say. The union between Puerto Rico and the United States may fall short of independence, but it offers greater sovereign powers than statehood. They say the United States also benefits from the relationship because Puerto Rico serves as a bridge to Latin America, offering the United States a showcase of economic development as well as military security.

The essence of the commonwealth myth is moderation. As University of Pennsylvania professor Henry Wells points out, commonwealth status was presented to Congress in 1950 as a cold war compromise between domestic and foreign opinion. Its appeal to the Puerto Rican people, however, was based on nineteenth-century nationalist values. Commonwealth was described as a "free associated state" that shared sovereignty with the United States while avoiding the bloody revolution absolute independence was said to require. Wells excuses this opportunism, but what commonwealth founder Luis Muñoz Marín described as a glass half-full has now come to be seen by virtually everyone as a half-empty promise.

The commonwealth myth projects the image of the noble peasant, the *jíbaro*, who can pull himself up by his bootstraps because of the benevolence of U.S. technology. In fact, it was exemption from Federal taxes that was the major force in the island's shift to industrialization. But unfortunately Puerto Rico has gradually become too expensive for labor-intensive industries, which have departed the island in large numbers for other parts of the Caribbean. Since the additional transportation costs make it almost impossible for the island to compete directly with the United States, adaptation to a new global economy is sorely needed, but the present pro-commonwealth administration has been slow to innovate. Unable to admit the limitations of its legacy, the commonwealth legend cannot be altered by today's political leaders without potentially devastating consequences for their standing with their party's faithful. They find themselves, then, in a similar predicament to that of the *independentistas* and the statehooders.

But if Puerto Rico is held prisoner by myths about its status, so too is the United States. Today's North American myth about Puerto Rico has remained almost unchanged since 1898. School textbooks teach our children that U.S. rule has been good for Puerto Rico, protecting the island from becoming an impoverished banana republic, prey to communist takeover. Congressional versions of this story permit only minor variations. Conservatives assert that national security requires continued rule over Puerto Rico; liberals usually cannot bring themselves to characterize U.S. domination of the island as colonialism, even if they recognize its darker side.

The suffocating effect of the United States' own myth was evident in the Senate hearings, held in the summer of 1989 by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, to consider legislation for a Puerto Rican plebiscite. The Bush Administration admitted that it favored statehood and then set out to break the kneecaps of the opposition. Brig. Gen. M.J. Byron testified that independence could not be absolute until the United States secured permanent control of military bases on the island. State Department counsel Mary Mochary denounced commonwealth status, stating that it granted "sovereignty which would be incompatible with remaining a part of the United States."

When it came to statehood Assistant Treasury Secretary Kenneth Gideon insisted that the financial drain on the U.S. treasury should not be considered in drafting the legislation, since it might bias voting. That statement provoked a *New York Times* editorial that tartly commented that Gideon's testimony was "like advising a car buyer with modest means to go for a Cadillac and not worry about payments."

The United States is prohibited by the Constitution and self-respect from possessing colonies, so Puerto Rico has been viewed as a territory awaiting admission into the Union since a 1901 court decision. It is a flattering myth. The Union becomes a private club, to which admission is decided only by its members. The applicant has no rights until it becomes a member, and it must be careful not to offend those who will decide on admission.

With this logic, the United States has maintained before the United Nations and the rest of the world that the Puerto Rican status question is an internal matter of the United States. This has been a dubious legal stance ever since the founding of the U.N. in 1945. When the U.N. charter pledged to abolish colonialism the United States agreed, and each year until 1952 Washington submitted a report on the Puerto Rican colony's advance to self-determination. Then, with the ink still wet on the July 25 Constitution, the U.N. was asked to remove Puerto Rico from the world's list of colonies. In 1953 the General Assembly accepted the commonwealth status as legitimate self-determination. Its

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enthusiasm was less than overwhelming—26 in favor, 16 opposed and 18 abstentions—but the vote seemed enough to end discussion.

In 1960 the U.N. drafted a stronger resolution on decolonization. Its provisions included the withdrawal of foreign troops from the territory before a plebiscite, supervision of the voting by international observers, amnesty for political prisoners and the transfer of sovereign powers to the voters from the rulers so that no future law could retroactively modify the decision of the people in the plebiscite. From Daniel Moynihan to Vernon Walters, U.S. ambassadors to the U.N. have used parliamentary footwork, bluster and threats to keep the issue of Puerto Rico from another vote in the General Assembly, which would inevitably impose the terms of the 1960 resolution. Recently a resolution to end all colonialism by the year 2000 was approved by a vote of 135 to 1, the lone opposition vote being cast by the United States.

The effort to hold a plebiscite in 1990 to decide the status issue once and for all may be doomed. A similar vote was held in 1967, and commonwealth status was an overwhelming winner. But because the process ignored international law, neither statehooders nor *independentistas* considered the results binding. In fact, the statehooders used the federally funded plebiscite organization as a springboard to their first electoral victory on their own since 1902. When asked how he could campaign on a pro-statehood plank in 1968, the year after the plebiscite, Governor Luis Ferré responded that its verdict in favor of commonwealth was binding only for 1967.

Statehooders will probably adopt the same attitude if they lose in 1990. They will keep on having plebiscites until they finally win one, demanding that others do what they have not done—abide by the results permanently. With the heavy-handed favoritism of Washington, it is possible they will get away with this maneuver. Commonwealth supporters will read the polls, and if they don't like the numbers they may invoke Hurricane Hugo as a reason to stall the voting indefinitely. The *independentistas* would be likely to protest a statehood win, and their threat to turn the island into a Caribbean version of Northern Ireland should not be taken lightly. Nor should the possibility of renewed brutal repression of the independence movement.

There are escape routes from this morass. The Dellums Resolution, presented in the House by the California Representative, makes a realistic adaptation of both U.S. constitutional law and international law. Jesse Jackson, who won the 1988 Democratic primary in Puerto Rico, resurrected this proposal in his campaign for the presidency. The Puerto Rican Bar Association has developed a procedure for convoking a Constitutional Convention in Puerto Rico to take over from the U.S. Congress the power to establish a true plebiscite. Political analyst Juan Manuel García Passalacqua has illustrated how the Marshall Islands might serve as a model for Puerto Rico. In legislation already approved by Congress, the Pacific possessions chose to be a republic, but

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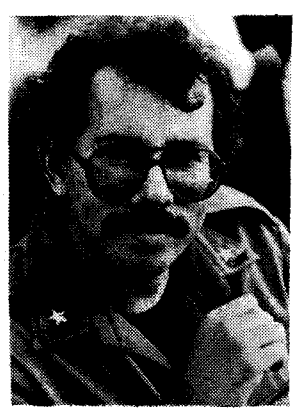

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with permanent military concessions to the United States and some shared economic responsibilities. If Puerto Rico followed suit it could take its seat in the U.N. and would be entitled to funds from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund instead of being dependent on the United States.

Resolution of the status issue by any of these means would be logical, but reason has little effect against powerful myths. The emotional energy necessary to move an entire people politically comes from mythic symbols, and no status solution will find compelling acceptance in Puerto Rico unless it is accompanied by a spellbinding new myth. Until then the island remains a place of a thousand faces, none truly its own. □

ESOP FABLES

Not Just a Capitalist Tool

BARTLETT NAYLOR

Did 1989 mark the dawn of corporate socialism in the United States? Last year a remarkable number of corporate giants ceded significant ownership to employees through employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs). In January workers at Procter & Gamble acquired 20 percent of the company. Lockheed, the weapons giant, sold employees a 17 percent stake in February. The Tribune Company, Boise Cascade, Cabot Corporation, Whitman, J.C. Penney and others have joined the trend. So have Colgate-Palmolive, 3M, Xerox, Delta Air Lines and Southwestern Bell. And United Airlines was nearly bought by a consortium made up of the pilots and flight attendants unions and management.

But the workers are hardly taking over corporate America. Nor did these companies turn to employee ownership out of newfound concern for their workers. The new ESOPs are gambits used by management primarily to fend off hostile takeovers and to cut the costs of benefit plans. In some rare cases workers manage to gain some financial rewards and some say in company affairs through an ESOP, but in many instances ESOPs are—to use the phrase coined by Corey Rosen, executive director of the National Center for Employee Ownership—just "MESOPs" for management.

Invented in the 1950s by a maverick San Francisco economist named Louis Kelso, the ESOP was envisioned as both a practical and ideological concept. In practice, it was a means for a Bay Area publisher to sell his business to his employees. But Kelso, who was advising the publisher, also claimed it would empower workers and improve productivity.

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Congress gave ESOPs a boost through a series of tax breaks in the 1970s. Most important, banks that lent employees the money to buy the stock got a 50 percent tax break on the interest income. This break was effectively repealed as of October 1989. Corporations can still deduct from income the dividends they pay on employee-owned stock, unlike the dividends they pay to outside investors.

These tax breaks spawned a respectable, though unspectacular, growth of ESOP plans. Through 1988, some 10,000 plans covered about 10 million workers, according to the N.C.E.O., although the vast majority of these employees owned only 1 or 2 percent of company stock.

Fueled by takeover fears, the trend is accelerating. The big ESOP has become the latest defensive measure against a hostile takeover bid. The laws of Delaware, where about half the Fortune 500 companies are incorporated, effectively prevent a raider owning less than 85 percent of the shares in a company from taking control. Without that stake, the buyer is barred from merging or divesting any of the target company's divisions for three years. Since most hostile bids are debt-financed, and this debt is repaid by selling off the assets of the target, this requirement provides a formidable defense against takeovers. By putting at least 15 percent of its shares in the hands of friendly employees, a Delaware-incorporated company can thwart a raid.

Polaroid showed the way. In the summer of 1988 it became the object of a hostile bid by Shamrock Holdings Inc. (Shamrock's money comes from Roy Disney, nephew of the animator. Disney got the boot from the Magic Kingdom following a raid by Saul Steinberg.) In defense, the camera maker placed 14 percent of its stock in an ESOP, later expanding this share to 22 percent. Shamrock contested the move, but in January 1989 the Delaware Chancery Court ruled for Polaroid. General counsels at other corporations under threat of takeover clearly read the opinion. The Tribune Company's ESOP came amid reports that the acquisition-minded Bass Group held a stake. Raider Harold Simmons held a potentially predatory position in Lockheed when the missile maker announced its employee ownership program. And Procter & Gamble faced an identical fate when the diaper maker and soap company unveiled its employee stock plan. Dunkin' Donuts blocked a bid by Kingsbridge Capital Group in May by putting 16 percent of its shares in an ESOP.

On the surface this trend may seem to be a boon to labor. Labor, as much as management, despises takeovers, which often lead to job losses. Antitakeover laws have glided through state legislatures with joint labor-management support. A.F.L.-C.I.O. chief Lane Kirkland likened takeover artists Carl Icahn, T. Boone Pickens and James Goldsmith to the Visigoths who sacked Rome.

But are workers who buy into their companies obtaining the benefits of ownership? Not quite. Even if employees own a controlling share of the business, management discourages their participation. Moreover, employees are paying for the stock, usually involuntarily, out of their pension funds.

Owning a piece of the company seldom comes free. At Polaroid, for example, the employees accepted (they did not vote on the plan) a 5 percent pay cut and a 3 percent reduc-

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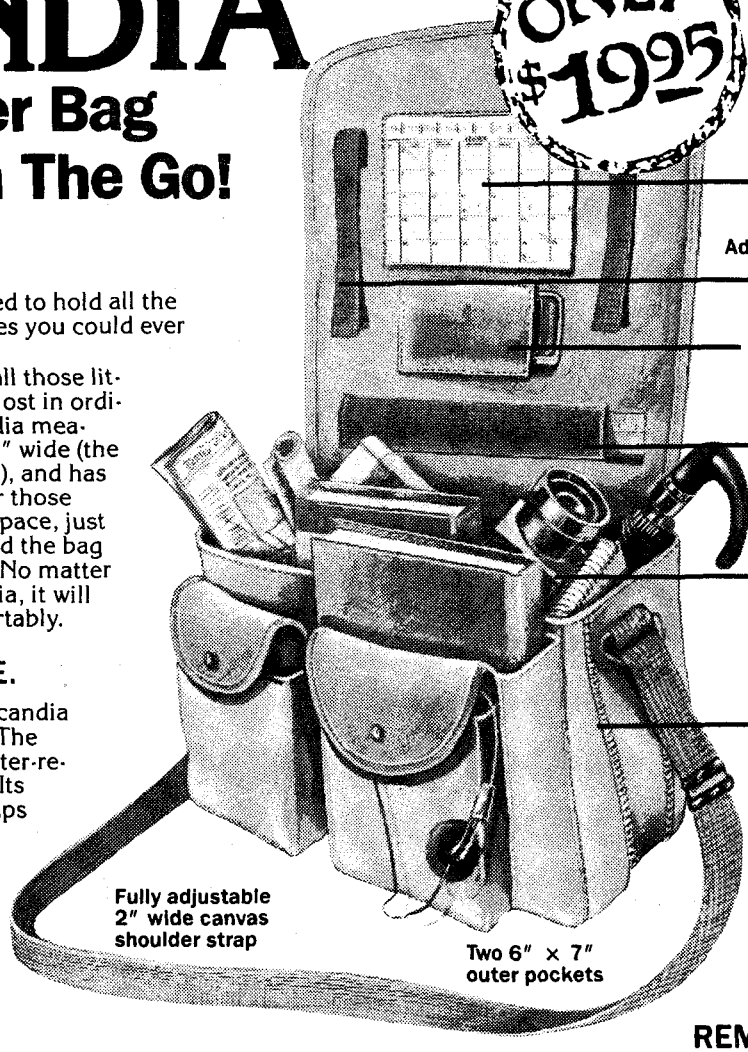
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tion in pay-scale increases set for April 1. They also gave up $6 million in corporate matching funds from the company's pension plan. As part of the deal, a profit-sharing retirement bonus worth $2 million was eliminated. All this money will pay off the $285 million loan that management arranged for the workers so they could buy just under 20 percent of the company's stock. Employee representatives at Polaroid, which is not unionized, fought the pay cuts even though they backed the ESOP and the effort to fight Shamrock. As long as Polaroid stock rises, this arrangement might turn out to be a good deal for them. But if the price drops, Polaroid workers will lose the money and security they once had.

Tribune employees are also exchanging their benefit plans for stock. Existing benefit plans will be phased out over ten years so that all but the senior employees will find that the stock is their major retirement savings. (Trustees of conventional pension plans are prohibited by law from putting all the money into one stock because of the risk.) And at almost all these companies, employees do not actually pocket the dividends. They go to the lender to pay off the loans used to buy the stock.

Boise Cascade and Whitman raised the stakes of the ESOP-for-pension swap when they kicked in health benefits as well. If you get sick after retiring from Boise Cascade you will need a few shares of company stock to pay the doctor. Company representative Scott Lamb said the timber firm will establish a "floor price" to protect employees against any precipitate fall in price and will use a "safer" form of stock. "We sent all our employees a letter stressing that we're not dropping the health plan overnight, it's being phased out." Besides, he adds, there are always Medicare payments from the government.

Just what the floor price will be is crucial, especially given soaring health-care costs. And the prospect of selling stock to pay for heart surgery may not provide the same peace of mind that traditional insurance does. "This is symbolic of the erosion of the private sector safety net that we've worked so hard to build," laments Meredith Miller, health benefits expert at the A.F.L.-C.I.O.

Another troubling feature of the new ESOPs is the conspicuous absence of employee participation on boards of directors. Tribune chair Stanton Cook explained in a press release that its ESOP expands "our longstanding philosophy of uniting employee and shareholder interests." But placing worker-shareholder representatives on the board was not part of the Tribune plan, according to representative Martha Lindeman. "We already have five employees on the board," she said, referring to the presidents of various Tribune subsidiaries. Polaroid did invite an employee to join its board, but it picked Marian Stanley, head of marketing and research, who is practically an executive.

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The case of Pacific Enterprises demonstrates that some companies are ready to fight employee-owners who want to exercise the traditional prerogatives of shareholders. Employees at Pacific control about 21 percent of the stock. The board and officers, by contrast, control only 1.5 percent. Sam Karl Weinstein, regional director of the Utility Workers Union of America, which represents many of the employees of Southern California Gas, the principal subsidiary of Pacific Enterprises, sought one of fifteen seats on the board. Pacific Enterprises outspent Weinstein $260,000 to $35,000 in the campaign for employee-owner votes. Chief executive officer Richard Farman, speaking for the company, noted, "I do not believe that a union leader can serve on the board without placing himself in the position of creating a conflict of interest." Director of investor relations A.M. Foster stressed that each member of the present board is "far more qualified" than Weinstein. Foster said that Weinstein, as an employee representative, can hardly claim the status of directors such as former Attorney General William French Smith, who serves on many other boards as well. "I haven't put anybody in jail, but I know more about the gas business than he does," responds Weinstein, who lost the election.

The response to the current wave of ESOPs demonstrates the double-edged character of the concept. Liberal politicians and a growing number of unions see employee ownership as a way to save jobs and stem the tide of plant closings in basic manufacturing. This group probably equates employee ownership with control. At the opposite end of the ideological spectrum conservative economists, investment bankers and corporate consultants see ESOPs and employee ownership as ways to increase productivity and are often eager to substitute the promise of stock appreciation for higher wages.

Despite the loss of the ESOP tax break, stock ownership plans are still the weapon of choice for managers who are threatened by raiders. The repeal of the deduction simply means that the cost of defense has gone up, not that it is obsolete. Recently the Chevron Company, fearing a potential acquisition move by Pennzoil, adopted a $1 billion plan, which is one of the largest in history.

Labor will continue to push for truly pro-worker ESOPs. One alternative would be to pressure Congress to give tax breaks to companies that have employees on their boards. Employee representatives should not be seen by management as invaders. They are unlikely to champion positions that would scorch the company's share price, since the stock is their retirement nest egg. And once employees gain representation on boards they could remedy some of the anti-worker provisions in recent ESOPs.

Jack Sheinkman, president of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, says that unions must play an active role in shaping ESOPs as a matter of survival. "The industry here is being restructured through leveraged buy-outs. We're poker chips in the takeover game, chips that can be thrown away. We've been forced to get involved to protect our membership." Employee-empowering ESOPs could provide labor with some chips of its own. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The Fall of Charlie Hustle

ELLIOTT J. GORN

PETE ROSE: My Story. *By Pete Rose and Roger Kahn. Macmillan. 300 pp. $18.95.*

Wade Boggs, Steve Garvey and Pete Rose are drinking together in a bar when an attractive woman walks in. "Man," Boggs drools, "would I like to spend the night with her."

Garvey is offended: "Wade, you're talking about the future mother of my child."

"Two to one she ain't," says Rose.

This joke circulated early last baseball season, and it aptly captures an important theme in our perception of sports and sports heroes. Boggs the womanizer and Rose the gambler display their love of the fast life. Garvey, known during his playing days as a straight arrow, even a prig, has his righteousness deflated in the punch line, as it was in real life by an ugly divorce and uglier paternity suits. The laughter comes from bringing the three tarnished stars together (in a bar, appropriately) and exposing Garvey's Boy Scout image with what amounts to sleaze one-upmanship.

The joke's exposer of hypocrisy, Pete Rose, was barred from baseball for gambling late last season. Now Rose helps tell his story in this autobiography-cum-biography written by Roger Kahn. Although Kahn began his research three years ago, he finished it hurriedly to take advantage of Rose's recent notoriety. Unfortunately, the speed and the circumstances of its writing show. It is a disappointing work, nowhere near what Kahn achieved in his lyrical *The Boys of Summer.*

Kahn is too taken with Rose to explain him; he abdicates his role of interpreter and so fails to help us understand his subject's tangled public and private lives. Chapters on the gambling charges against Rose are defensive, petty and unconvincing. But despite Kahn's cheerleading and Rose's special pleading, we do get some interesting material.

For example, the brash young second baseman found most Cincinnati players aloof when he broke into the majors in 1963, but two black stars, Vada Pinson and Frank Robinson, took Rose under their wing. An unnamed team official called the rookie aside one day and lectured him that "hanging around with niggers" was bad for his image. Rose told Kahn, "To call terrific ballplayers like Frank Robinson and Vada Pinson niggers. . . . I've gotten excited on the ball field and used some language, but to this day that's one word nobody in the world will hear me use." Rose continued to fraternize with Pinson and Robinson. Yet, as Rose and Kahn's book reveals, Rose was not averse to making the occasional mild racial jokes that are common among ballplayers. Kahn reports these, but fails to use them to discuss the relationship between black and white ballplayers—a subject he explored sensitively in his history of the integration of baseball.

Similarly, Rose comes off in these pages as unrelievedly aggressive. While he was not pathological (like Ty Cobb, the player with whom he is most often compared), fans and sportswriters accused him on at least two occasions of running the bases with such ferocity that he caused needless injury to opposing players. In daily life too, Rose has been ever pugnacious, speeding in his sports cars, betting at the track, dealing with the press. Yet he reacted strongly to the experience of visiting the wounded in base hospitals in Vietnam: "That's all I know of war firsthand, kids busted up and blinded by shrapnel. . . . I don't think I'd make much of a military man. Salute and tell the troops, 'Go kill. . . . ' I like things a helluva lot better without the salute and telling the troops something else. 'Go to the right when they throw you that outside slider. Come on. Hit the hell out of the ball.' " What do we make of this? Kahn leaves us to draw our own conclusions.

What sort of upbringing produces such an aggressive ballplayer? What demons drove this man to succeed far beyond his intrinsic talent? Pete Rose speaks about his parents, especially his father, only in terms of filial devotion. There had to be more. Pete Rose Sr. was a bookkeeper; migraine headaches and poor eyesight came with the job, and he died of heart failure in middle age. The bank where he worked demanded that employees stay until every penny of the day's transactions was accounted for, and the elder Rose hesitated to leave even as the heart attack that killed him struck. The safety valve for Pete Sr. was local sports; he was legendary as a running back on a semiprofessional Cincinnati team until his 40s. Temporary escape for the father became a career for his sons, as he pushed them toward professional athletics.

No doubt Pete Jr. loved his father, as he says, but the feelings must have been mixed toward a man who demanded so much of himself and others. Here I think of Frederick Exley's brilliant "fictional memoir," *A Fan's Notes.* Exley, no athlete himself, was the son of a renowned local ballplayer in Watertown, New York. The love and rivalry between them left young Exley walking the boundary of insanity, and he implicates his feelings toward his hero-father in his eventual alcoholism, self-loathing, misogyny and pathological addiction to spectatorship. Fathers play catch with sons, yes, but sometimes with murder in their eyes.

Maybe I'm expecting too much from a sports book, but Kahn himself set a high standard. We get a lot of information here and plenty of opportunity to remember great events of the past. Just reading about Willie Mays, Hank Aaron and Sandy Koufax, about the Big Red Machine, the 1975 World Series and Charlie Hustle's quest for hit number 4,192 revives old passions.

What is missing from *My Story*, however, is a sense of the complexity of the game. For fans and sportswriters, baseball may signify the end of winter, nostalgia, regret, hope and rejuvenation. For players, however, baseball is violent, both physically and psychologically. An episode from *The Boys of Summer* captures that intensity.

Clem Labine, a good if not especially hard-throwing Dodger pitcher, needed someone to assume the hitter's stance as he tried to work the soreness out of his pitching arm; Kahn, a 24-year-old reporter, volunteered. "The ball exploded past the plate with a sibilant whoosh, edged by a buzzing, as of hornets," he wrote. "I had never heard a thrown ball make that sound before." Then Labine began to work on his curveball. "I

Elliott J. Gorn teaches American Studies at Miami University and is the author of The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America *(Cornell University Press).*

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watched the baseball approach. It closed with me. I was paralyzed. Then, at what seemed the last millisecond, the spinning ball grabbed air and hooked away from my head and over the plate." It was all Kahn could do not to throw away the bat and drop to the ground.

Later, sitting with a drink in the press room, Kahn realized how terrifying and unromantic the professional game really was: "All the baseball I had played was irrelevant to sinkers that hissed like snakes and curves that paralyzed. . . . A fastball would shatter the human temple. I didn't want to play this game. I had never wanted to play *this* game." *The Boys of Summer* is a homage to men who do not really "play" at all, but who face the brutal demands of their craft with grace, courage, humor, pettiness, petulance and self-destructiveness—a whole range of human responses to intense pressure.

So we return to Pete Rose and his gambling. Perhaps he wagered on baseball, perhaps not; Rose claims that he drew the line at his own sport, but the case against him compiled by Federal investigators is strong. Worse, some say, was his refusal to acknowledge that he had a problem. He admits now that he gambled on various sports and that he consorted with shady individuals. Both activities are grounds for expulsion from baseball.

Officials have a legitimate need to protect their sports from allegations that the games are fixed. That said, it is also true that the charges against Rose resonate with conservative cultural rhetoric. The conservatives evoke a lost golden age before drugs, working mothers or AIDS; talking about sports, they spin fantasies of the good old days when athletes didn't care about big money or fast living. Sometimes the complaint smacks of racial or class resentment, for it assumes that athletes, most of whom come from modest backgrounds, should be grateful for their inflated salaries. But to see gambling and drug use by athletes as a problem of private morality misses the point; both occur in the context of a larger culture. On Wall Street in the 1980s, after all, a form of gambling was the path to success, and cocaine was one of its perks.

Pete Rose was the consummate ballplayer of our era—not necessarily the best, or the most valuable, though those cases can be made—but the one who played most intensely, whose very existence seemed to depend on the game. But while Rose's combative personality, his aggressiveness and machismo, were perfect for baseball, they were also bound to get him in trouble.

Alcoholism and drug abuse, gambling and womanizing by men who earn incredible salaries for playing the games we played as children are troubling. But much more troubling is the team owners' disregard for fans and players in their worship of the bottom line. Worse still are the exploitation of high school and college athletes, the racism that keeps blacks out of management and ownership, and the sexism of the sporting culture.

Baseball may be a game, but it is also a very lucrative business. Owners never go broke. They make big bucks from media contracts, ballclubs constantly appreciate in value, the Federal government gives them special tax dispensations and municipalities offer sweetheart deals on the rental of public facilities.

I live near Cincinnati, and people here are upset at what happened to Pete Rose. At first it seemed like wounded local pride to me, but that's not all. There is the resentment of Middle America toward the coastal centers of money and power, glamour and glitz. Listen to the accents on the call-in programs and you hear class resentment too, although it is

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never clearly articulated. Who are these lawyers, this Yale president (the late commissioner Bart Giamatti), these baseball executives to judge Pete? How dare they condemn one of us who rose so high? You mean they never gamble or abuse their privileges? Do they possess half his skill, his drive, his courage?

Sharing these fans' admiration for Pete Rose, Roger Kahn tries to vindicate him. But Rose doesn't need it; he vindicated himself more than 4,192 times. He would have been better served by a more textured portrait that took him seriously as a ballplayer and a man—the kind of portrait Kahn drew of Pee Wee Reese, Jackie Robinson, Carl Furillo and the others. *The Boys of Summer* buzzed with tensions—between Brooklyn and Manhattan, blacks and whites, Jews and gentiles, the life of the mind and the pleasures of the body. Rose, his city and his times deserve the same respectful treatment.

Should Pete Rose be elected to the Hall of Fame? The question is silly. It assumes that baseball was once pure, that Rose sullied it, that he must be made an example to others. I'm a Dodger fan; I hated the Big Red Machine and I never liked Rose. But if he isn't inducted, no player in recent history deserves to be. Two to one he makes it. □

Those Were the Days?

DAVID NASAW

PLAYING FOR KEEPS: A History of Early Baseball. *By Warren Goldstein. Cornell University Press. 182 pp. $21.95.*

Nineteen eighty-nine was not the best year for baseball fans, especially those in the East. Our heroes were hurt, our teams kept losing, Pete Rose was banished, the promised pennant races never materialized, the World Series was interrupted by an earthquake and was colossally boring when resumed. At the same time, player salaries continued to rise, with the top stars demanding more than $3 million and the average player receiving in excess of $489,000 for six months of warm-weather work. Fans and baseball writers alike lamented, for yet another year, the loss of the good old days when the game was still played for fun.

Baseball remains our paradise lost, a perpetual disappointment, where the best hitters make outs two-thirds of the time and the home team seldom if ever makes it to October. One of the many virtues of Warren Goldstein's *Playing for Keeps: A History of Early Baseball* is that it explains why we continue to care, our hopes eternally and absurdly renewed each spring and dashed each autumn.

There are two distinct histories of baseball: the fans' history, marked by declension, and the specialists', a more sober tale of incorporation and professionalization. Goldstein wisely chooses to tell both. This is a marvelous book, tightly structured, entertaining, beautifully written; and, like the best social history, it focuses on the particular (the story of baseball) to enlarge our understanding of the general (American society and culture).

The primary task of baseball's early promoters, chief among them the newspaper reporters, was transforming a boy's game into a "manly" enterprise. What we today know as "baseball" was in the 1840s only one of several variations of an outdoor game played with ball and bat. The adults who played it were organized into fraternal clubs centered in urban neighborhoods and workplaces. Like other forms of manly socializing, their athletic contests were followed by extensive wining, dining and fraternization off the field. On the field, they "worked" at their game, sharpening their skills and learning their craft. Baseball for them was not child's play but a manly game that required discipline, sobriety and hard work.

The cult of manliness had class connotations. When the game's promoters spoke disparagingly of boys and the boys' game, they were referring not only to an age group but to the gangs of unskilled workers and apprentices who, they feared, did not take the game seriously, refused to obey the authority of the umpire and were, on the field and off, given to boisterous displays of uncontrolled enthusiasm. Manly men, on the baseball field and on the job, were, by contrast, restrained, self-controlled and, though they might be given to argument, ultimately obedient to the umpire's call.

In the late 1850s and 1860s, the rules

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were refined and codified to make the game less boyish. Until then, batters had been called out if fielders caught their hits on the fly or on a bounce. But the game's promoters, intent on purging it of its boyish elements, contended that catching the ball after it had bounced was less than manly. Real men (in this era before baseball gloves) caught baseballs in their bare hands, on the fly.

Baseball was not only the first American sport, it was the first national game. As the players, promoters and newspaper reporters emphasized the competitive component far beyond the recreational, clubs found that they had to spend extra money to build winning teams. Star players revolved from team to team, city to city, and, as the Middle West became a baseball stronghold, from region to region. Statistics became an integral part of the game, not only because they allowed fans to follow in the newspapers what was now a national game but because they provided management with a way to measure worker productivity.

The nationalization of the game almost destroyed the ground on which it had been built. How could a fan remain loyal to the hometown team if that team was loaded with recently purchased out-of-towners? For other sports, this might have been less of a problem, but not for baseball, where in every game a "home" team battles "visitors," and the goal of every player, every runner, is "home base." There were no simple solutions to the problem. Each hometown wanted the right to build a stronger team by purchasing outsiders while at the same time keeping its stars. The reserve clause, which was added to players' contracts in the 1880s, gave clubs the right to "reserve" a player's baseball services indefinitely. It protected owners from one another and kept salaries down by converting "player-employees into club property" liable to be bought, sold or traded at a moment's notice. It did not, however, solve the problem faced by fans.

Fortunately for baseball and for the owners, the fans adapted to the "complete industrialization of the game" by learning to participate in what Goldstein calls "the fictive process of hometown identification." The national game maintained its local roots by borrowing from the theater. If the players were not residents of the city they represented, they could at least act the part by putting on the hometown costume. Uniforms saved the day by protecting fans against the "loss of baseball innocence"—the recognition that their hometown heroes were "potentially, universally interchangeable" and that baseball was a business.

The cyclical, or fan's, history of baseball, with its eternal lament for the good old days, does not correspond to the institutional or linear history of the game. There were no good old days, Goldstein tells us. Baseball has been a business for well over a hundred years:

> The notion of sport as pure recreation, of leisure activity as pure play, could arise only after baseball play had also become baseball work. . . . Only when professional baseball seemed to have reached a truly dominant position in the baseball world did the concept of pure sport and recreation receive formulation and attract champions.

In bemoaning the loss of the good old days we are recalling not the institutional or social history of the game but our personal experience, our private history of the sport we played as children. Baseball is too important for us to admit that it is only another business owned by owners and managed by managers. Far better to celebrate an imagined past and invest it with our unsatisfied utopian longings for a social world where play, amusement and sport are celebrated not for the profits but for the joy they bring to players and spectators alike. □

Business as Usual

FELICIA E. HALPERT

NEVER TOO YOUNG TO DIE: The Death of Len Bias. *By Lewis Cole. Pantheon. 252 pp. $18.95.*

WINNING IS THE ONLY THING: Sports in America Since 1945. *By Randy Roberts and James Olson. Johns Hopkins University Press. 246 pp. $18.95.*

A PAYROLL TO MEET: A Story of Greed, Corruption, and Football at SMU. *By David Whitford. Macmillan. 221 pp. $18.95.*

THE HUNDRED YARD LIE: The Corruption of College Football and What We Can Do to Stop It. *By Rick Telander. Simon and Schuster. 223 pp. $17.95.*

It's not easy reading the sports pages these days. Those seeking fantasy and wish fulfillment with their morning coffee find instead tales of rapes, robberies, suicides, drug arrests, extramarital affairs, lies and corruption. Why do we persist in thinking that athletes are different, more pristine than the rest of society? Perhaps it's because so many of us enjoyed sports in childhood and still like to imagine ourselves soaring above the hoop as the buzzer sounds, or smacking that ninth-inning home run in the World Series.

In reality, only a tiny fraction of the youngsters who take to the diamonds, fields and gyms of this country end up as professional athletes. About 3,000 African-Americans are currently employed in sports, for example, a number which includes coaches and administrative personnel. It is statistically more likely that a black high school athlete will become a doctor or lawyer than a professional ballplayer. Nevertheless, kids still get sold on the idea that sports will be their meal ticket. They get funneled into youth programs, high-school programs and finally big-time college sports programs.

University of Maryland basketball star Len Bias almost snagged the brass ring. The Boston Celtics made him their first choice in the 1986 draft. Less than two days later Bias was dead of a drug overdose. His death set off a storm of media coverage—in a nine-month period *The Washington Post* ran more than 400 Bias-related articles. After a long investigation a friend and former junior-varsity player was prosecuted and acquitted of supplying Bias the cocaine.

Lewis Cole's *Never Too Young to Die* chronicles the aftermath of Bias's death and reveals the web of drug use enveloping and decimating the nation's black community. He rightly criticizes the Reagan Administration's cynical claim of waging a war on drugs while destroying employment opportunities for African-Americans and encouraging the greedy accumulation of wealth.

Cole has particular disdain for the University of Maryland coach, Lefty Driesell, who had a ten-year contract and one of the best teams in the country. Here was an "educator" who pressed for admission of academically ineligible players, apparently did not care that Bias was still twenty-one credits short of a degree in

Felicia E. Halpert's articles and essays on sports have appeared in a number of publications.

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his final semester, and tried to convince a rape victim to drop charges against a team member. At a press conference Driesell told listeners that the religious Bias was "in a better position right now than we are. He's at home with the Lord."

Unfortunately, Len Bias remains a shadowy figure in this book. We do learn that he wasn't the born-again golden boy promoted by the Maryland P.R. people, but the specifics of his past remain hazy. Cole methodically recounts the events leading to the misguided trial instead of shedding light on this talented athlete's tenuous balancing of his connections to his different worlds.

Winning Is the Only Thing, by Randy Roberts and James Olson, reminds us that while the sports world may be seamier than ever, scandals are nothing new. In 1929 the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching released a study documenting grade tampering, illegal payments and alumni interference in college sports programs. In the 1940s and 1950s boxing's reputation was badly damaged by evidence of fixed bouts, and point-shaving scandals were common in college basketball. In the midst of the Korean War most of West Point's football team was kicked out of school for cheating on exams. And when Wilt Chamberlain, one of the most highly recruited basketball players ever, left the University of Kansas after his sophomore year to join the pros, he revealed that he had been paid about $20,000 to play for the school.

Roberts and Olson show that television has dramatically influenced the development of many sports. In 1960 ABC's "up close and personal" coverage of college football sparked a revolution in sports television. Nielsen ratings skyrocketed. The networks, keenly aware of the money to be made, started bidding wars. In 1970, for example, the National Basketball Association was paid $1 million for broadcast rights; the 1986 negotiations brought in $70 million. Total TV revenues for major league baseball in 1952 were $5.4 million. CBS recently agreed to shell out $1.06 billion to cover sixteen regular season games, the playoffs and the World Series. Local stations pay millions more.

Meanwhile, it has become nearly impossible for minor sports to become majors or for newly organized pro leagues to flourish without a television contract. Women's sports, for example, remain all but invisible except during the Olympics and once a year during the N.C.A.A. basketball finals.

The football team at Southern Methodist University returned to the gridiron this fall after a two-year hiatus. That university holds the distinction of running the first program to receive the so-called death penalty from the N.C.A.A. The judgment—a total shutdown of the program—was a punishment for monthly payoffs to players totaling thousands of dollars. Money continued to change hands even after the school was on probation for illegal payments.

David Whitford does a fine job of detailing a decade of sordid events leading to S.M.U.'s banishment from football in *A Payroll to Meet*. They occurred at an institution that built its football stadium eleven years before constructing a library. The slimier participants in this scam included the Governor of Texas, Bill Clements; leading Dallas businessmen; S.M.U. trustees; and two university presidents and football coaches. Everyone wanted to win bad. So bad, in fact, that hundred-dollar bills were pinned to high-school bulletin boards to entice potential recruits. Ron Meyer, who escaped the S.M.U. morass that he helped create and is now coach of the professional Indianapolis Colts, is portrayed as particularly sleazy in his recruiting methods.

Ironically, immediately after the N.C.A.A.'s judgment day, the S.M.U. campus was flooded with coaches and recruiters enticing players with their own sweet deals. Whitford wants us to feel sympathy for fans who remain loyal after the players leave. But more poignant is the recognition that to be a winner in big-time sports, nearly everyone plays the game the S.M.U. way.

The scandal at S.M.U. came about because the school violated a certain set of rules. But the time has come to acknowledge that the rules themselves are the problem. Successfully competing in Division I sports like football and basketball requires the services of top-level players. That means paying for them. And why not? As Rick Telander notes in *The Hundred Yard Lie*, the real scandal in college football is that although there's money everywhere, the players are permitted only a scholarship. The N.C.A.A. forbids university officials from giving players institutional or personal money. Getting a job during the school year is also prohibited. "You are an economic prisoner on a campus where there are most likely lots of rich kids with nice clothes and hot cars," Telander says.

Few of these athletes ever receive an academic education. Many attend school

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simply because it's their only access to the professional pipeline. Yet players are prohibited from signing with an agent or a pro team before their college eligibility expires. When it does, most suddenly find themselves with few options for the future.

While the financial stakes in college ball are huge, it's the athletic departments, not the universities, that usually get the bucks. These citadels are set up as separate financial entities, and all sports-related income is funneled into them. For the rest of the school to benefit, the athletic department must O.K. the release of funds. Despite all the money they make, 62 percent of Division I athletic departments ran budget deficits in 1988. The University of Michigan athletic department, with a $20 million budget, was $2.5 million in the red.

Successful coaches often earn salaries in the hundreds of thousands, and they are usually paid much more than the rest of the faculty. They get additional income from television and radio shows, speaking engagements and product endorsements. Television coverage means more money for the networks and local stations. Universities get name recognition, citizens get a team to obsess about and the business community gets a tremendous economic boost. When Texas A&M faced the "death penalty" last year, it was estimated that the local economy would suffer a loss of $25 million.

Schools bring in players and expect high performance on the field, but supervision of these young people is often weak to nonexistent. Approximately 1 million high-school and 70,000 college football players are injured each season. Steroid use is rampant and practically a necessity in order to compete, or even survive, against other raging young behemoths. Graduation rates are abysmally low.

In this atmosphere of neglect, behavior can reach criminal levels. At Oklahoma University last year three football players were arrested for gang-raping a student; one teammate shot another; and the quarterback sold drugs to an undercover agent. At one point the local newspaper considered publishing a Sooner All-Time All-Criminal Team, position by position.

Unless there is a fundamental change in how we think about the mix of sports and education, the scandals will only intensify. In its scramble for additional revenue and ways to fill air time, television has earmarked high-school football and boys' basketball as potential bonanzas for the future. A national championship has already been envisioned. Reebok paid the California Interscholastic Federation $1 million over a three-year period to sponsor all C.I.F. championship events. The company lodged a complaint last season when an all-star basketball player was photographed wearing Nikes. And the Nebraska Legislature considered a bill that would have made the N.C.A.A. liable for lost revenues caused by sanctions imposed against schools the state university was scheduled to play.

Tinkering and wrist-slapping have not been effective. The N.C.A.A. puts schools on probation because of rules violations, not for failure to educate or control the criminal behavior of athletes. The recent Congressional call for the reporting of athletes' graduation rates by colleges may lead the colleges to issue more diplomas. But it doesn't mean that more learning will occur. Academic advisers already get pressure from the coaching staff and administrators to pass failing students.

Since top-level college basketball and football programs are essentially the minor leagues for professional teams, it's time to start treating them that way. Telander's suggestion for football is an Age Group Professional League that would be open to anyone aged 18 to 22 and would be partially subsidized by the N.F.L. Schools could either join this league or play scaled-down "college football." Players in the A.G.P.L. would receive contracts and salaries and a year of education credit at the university for each season they played.

A professional minor-league program makes sense; maintaining the name and official connection with a university does not. The teams should rent the facilities, let people in the city or state root for a renamed team and get colleges out of the process. Then it won't be S.M.U. versus the University of Texas, or Notre Dame versus the world anymore. It becomes what it already is: two semipro ballclubs in the business of playing games.

Sports can be a vital part of a student's educational experience. But as these books demonstrate, not at the current prices. □

Seven Sisters

CAROLYN COOKE

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS. *Edited by Alison Fell. Serpent's Tail. (U.S. distributor Consortium Books, St. Paul, Minnesota.) 226 pp. $10.95.*

Is sin a feminist issue? Do women sin differently from men? Since the days of the archdemons, Alison Fell points out in her introduction to these seven stories from the near side of hell, the Deadly Sins have been personified as male—Lucifer is Pride, Leviathan is Envy and so on. "Woman, when she appears, is Virtue: Meekness, Patience, Abstinence, Industry, Chastity, Charity, Generosity. Otherwise she is Lust, the body rampant."

Why? Possibly because through the Middle Ages nobody thought women were intellectually capable of *morality*, much less of turpitude, of thinking through such challenging matters as revenge and murder and taking the Lord's name in vain. The famous exception, of course, was Lust. Well before anybody hit on the idea of a G-spot, Chaucer knew that even married women could have fun in bed.

Now it is time to settle the score. In these seven stories, Kathy Acker, Leslie Dick, Zoë Fairbairns, Alison Fell, Sara Maitland, Agnes Owens and Michèle Roberts take on Lust, Envy, Covetousness, Sloth, Gluttony, Pride and Anger. "After so many centuries of upholding Virtue," says Fell, "surely our imaginations contain all the resplendent crimes our history lacks."

There are no ordinary people in *The Seven Deadly Sins*. These women are obsessive; they go too far. The stories assert themselves boldly on the page, mix myth, hallucinations, stories within stories, and even realism that would make Dreiser look misty-eyed, especially in two of the strongest stories, Fell's work on Sloth and Dick's on Envy. There is a desperate, I'll-try-anything quality at work here—but these are desperate times, the stories teach us, and require extreme acts. Which brings us to our second question: If these women are so *sinfully* excessive, bizarre, manic, virulently premenstrual, bitchy, etc., why do they remind us so much of you and me? In Dick's psychological melodrama "Envy," a woman torments herself with thoughts about the child she

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does not have: "Jeanie thought of a baby as something that would give her exactly what she had to have, precisely meet her needs. Her wish had all the urgency and thrill of unrequited love."

Jeanie is a postmodern classic: the creative, successful, thirtysomething urban woman afraid of and attracted by the idea of ordinariness—afraid to lose the little claim she has staked for herself in this man's world, longing for a child, listening to the tick, tick of her biological clock and worrying, *Is this retrograde or is it nature?* Meantime (being the late 1980s, after all), every other woman in the street is pushing a pram or gliding by belly-first, ripe with child. Dick uses thoroughness to transcend the trite in evoking Jeanie's textbook case of Envy, which has consigned her already to a sort of babyless hell. Even if she were to conceive a child, Jeanie convinces herself, happiness is not for her:

> And then there's all the illness stuff, I probably can't have kids anyway, because of my blocked tubes, chlamydia, the clap, and then if I do manage to conceive, I'm a million times more likely to miscarry than most people, because of all my illnesses, my weird cervix, etc. That's if it's not an ectopic pregnancy which I'm even *more* prone to.

Jeanie obsesses. She talks to friends on the telephone, to her analyst, even to an aspiring angel in heaven, who has clearance to return to earth as an infant in order to research the mystery of the pre-Oedipal phase. She makes notes on what Freud would say about her condition, makes lists of babies she has heard of who have died, worries about whether she should write another book instead.

Jeanie and Stephen, her significant other, together in bed, engage in a baby dialectic:

"J: We'd all like to be the child—the child is so beautiful, so *lovely*."

"S: No, everyone wants to be the one the child loves—the one the child runs to, or responds to. We all want to have the rights of a mother, we want to take liberties."

The question for Jeanie remains: Whom do I envy? The mother or the child?

"The devil's sexual appetites being common knowledge, it came to pass that in the course of his several marriages seven children were born," writes Alison Fell in "Sister Whale," her tale of Sloth. "Much to the devil's chagrin, every last one of them was a daughter, and having little patience with girls or their names, he simply called each one after whatever sin happened to take his fancy at the time of her birth."

And little Sloth grows up in Fell's story of mistaken—lost—identity. Dee returns to Australia to visit her sister, Mona, whom she has not seen for twenty years. In the meantime, Dee has become a feminist, a European and a writer (who has written "hundreds and thousands of words and not one of them about Mona"). Mona has not had it so good. When her husband "upped and offed with a married woman," Mona sought comfort in food—half-pound chocolate bars and Smarties and orange squash. Now she wears tent dresses and spends her evenings eating and renting the kind of mass-market videos in which the heroes are supermen, unreal. Worse, Mona identifies not with Dee's feminist heroines but with beached whales. She confides tearfully, "Their own weight can crush them to death."

Throughout the story, Dee tries to define herself as Industry, as a thin person, to differentiate herself from Sloth in the lumpy form of Mona. Dee prunes Mona's hydrangeas, determines to take on all the cooking, to *get things done*, as if a reunion with Mona were another item listed To Do in her Filofax. Yet however much Dee shows herself the opposite of Mona, two new heads of the Hydra pop up. Dee wakes in the night to "Pre-Menstrual Mean Time," and her "whale-self wakes on a wave." Harpooned in her dreams by Jack Kerouac, Dee "rolls and dives for safety. . . . In a minute she'll outgrow all narrowness and then who will she be, who, if not narrow any longer?" And again, Dee wonders, what did it mean, exactly, that their mother bought Dee a Mona-sized brown evening dress last Christmas? "Now it's eerily clear that Mother couldn't tell one daughter from the other; Mother simply got her daughters mixed up."

Fell is the author of two collections of poetry and several novels, including *The Bad Box*, in which she also uses cubist effects, placing dream and reality in violent proximity to expose the frailty of ego. Fell is gritty and wry, and though neither Mona nor Dee emerges as a particularly sympathetic character, by making us mindful of the tide of Sloth we all swim against, the author has made "Sister Whale" into a deep, sad, funny story.

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Sad but not funny, and only as deep as the nearest gutter, is Kathy Acker's encounter with Lust. Acker, the biggest "name" among the contributors to *The Seven Deadly Sins*, takes this only sin traditionally personified as female and turns the virgin/whore dichotomy on its ear in a self-consciously bizarre and ugly story. Lust is a male prostitute who spends half the story wandering the streets of Berlin, picking up "sadistic and masochistic drifters," until finally he strangles a sailor named Joachim. Inexplicably, the story then moves to St. Mark's Church in the Bowery, where a poetry reading is in progress. The audience consists of "ugly old men" poets, students and bums. "The students weren't yuppies, but revolutionary radicals and non-revolutionary radicals who aspired to the radicalness of bums. . . . No one gave a damn about the reading."

What Kathy Acker does so well in novels such as *Sex and Death in High School*, where she creates a pornographic novel told from the point of view of the exploited woman; in *Don Quixote*, where DQ is not only an American but a woman as well; and in *Great Expectations*, where the narrator changes both identity and gender, doesn't work here. The pornography ceases to be anarchic commentary, fervid reaction; rather, it becomes simply what it appears to be. The atmosphere has all the gluey realism of a viewing booth at a peep show, and the awkward prosiness of the story and the lugubrious juvenile humor don't help:

> Dead people don't fuck. Just like my mom when she was alive. Vomit would have been prettier than the collection of characteristics on this face. Only prettiness is no criterion for high literary quality. His was the face of a literary patriarch, for his wrinkles resembled a compilation of Mr. Reagan's, Margaret Thatcher's, and the asshole of a purple assed baboon who's just been diarrhoeic. Man descended from the monkey.

Fortunately, Acker's story is the sinful exception in this collection. The remaining stories sparkle. Sara Maitland's "Gluttony" describes the horror of a young infanticidal mother who loves nurturing herself more than nurturing her new baby, and also the life of Mother Angela, a nun who belongs to a particularly ascetic sisterhood but is guilt-ridden by her hunger: She knows it is an insult to Christ's love.

In Michèle Roberts's grim fairy tale of Anger, "The Story of Melusine," a Provençal woman drops her baby in the kitchen fire. Though scarred an angry red, the baby lives, only to be raped by her schoolmaster in pubescence and married to him. Agnes Owens's story of Pride, "When Shankland Comes," is the most straightforward of the bunch, a lean and touching account of a mother who takes apparently inordinate pride in her shiftless son and in her ability as a single mother to maintain a modest standard at home. In Zoë Fairbairns's darkly comic "Covetousness," a young writer is driven nearly to insanity by the pressures of money, real estate and a brazen alternative press.

The answer finally is, yes, Virginia, sin is a feminist issue. Women do sin differently from men. For a start, our expectations of life are overblown, absurd. We demand nothing less than love, real estate, eternal thinness, children, friendship and happiness. Yet we are plagued by misery in the form of loneliness, hunger, fat cells, PMS, pushy agents and irresponsible presses, lazy good-for-nothing sons, infertility, chlamydia and malevolent men. The final question asked—and answered—in *The Seven Deadly Sins* is this: What is Everywoman supposed to do to prove that she is capable of the most egregious reactions to the cruel hands dealt by fate—scarf down another box of Bentick chocolates? Eat her young? □

ART

ARTHUR C. DANTO

Tim Rollins + K.O.S.

My first experience with the work of Tim Rollins + K.O.S.—a name initially as mystifying as that of many rock groups—came from the striking cover of *Artforum* for May 1988, which showed a fragment, as I learned, from one of their *Amerika* tableaux, which was reproduced as a whole but in black and white, and much reduced in size, on the contents page of that adventurous publication. The image on the cover was of work very little like anything I was aware existed in the art world of that moment; and indeed, it was unclear from the image alone whether it was contemporary at all, since it was composed of what appeared to be trumpets, keys and crosses, all in gold against a whitish background, and looked, at first glance, as if it might be a marvelous illumination

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from an old ecclesiastical text or a celestial emblem from a medieval work, or even an ornament, elaborate and intricate, from some goldsmith's hand. Closer examination of the background would have revealed it to be made of pages from a printed text, evidently pasted down like oblongs of gold leaf. There were twelve columns of such pages, each column eight pages high, and one might have computed the size of the trumpets and other forms from this, and even have inferred, from this curious use of printed pages, that the work must be fairly recent. But such forensic deductions were forestalled by the curatorial legend on the contents page itself:

> Tim Rollins + K.O.S., Amerika X (detail), 1986-88, watercolor, charcoal, and bistre on book pages on linen, 60 x 175". Executed in the South Bronx. From the "Amerika" series, which was begun in 1984, and takes its name from Franz Kafka's novel *Amerika*. The images of each work are painted on the pages of the book. See p. 111.

On page 111, one encountered the cover article, by Donald Kuspit, devoted to "American Activist Art Today." A survey as well as a critical analysis, Kuspit's piece was dense with the proper names of those artists through whom the author was seeking to plot a movement afoot in the art world, as he believed, of a new sort of politically or socially engaged work. Toward the end of the piece Kuspit wrote: "The exuberant yet elegant work of Tim Rollins and K.O.S. asks its audience to go beyond questions of formalist eloquence to arrive at a larger definition of what constitutes effective activist art-making." As nothing further was said about the presumed activist artmaker, I turned back to the remarkable cover image, which had by then begun to look rather rococo, as if an embellishment from a Bavarian baroque church, and tried to feel the imperative to go beyond its elegance and exuberance to the larger questions regarding activist artmaking I was intended to ponder. But either I or the image was not up to the task. I still greatly admired it, but realized, once more, that one of my grandfather's wise utterances has an equally wise converse: You cannot judge a cover by the book. Nothing in this exceptionally rich issue of *Artforum* especially clarified its stunning face.

I find it odd, in retrospect, that Tim Rollins + K.O.S. received so few words of explanatory text when one would have thought an important statement about their work was being made by choosing it as the cover illustration, which after all confers immense prestige. May 1988 was an important issue to the editors of *Artforum*, for it marked the twentieth anniversary of the student uprisings in Europe and the United States in which many of them had participated. The editors marked the occasion with a portfolio of photographs of outstanding works of art from 1968, which seemed to them to have promised a new beginning for art and for everything else. It was their view that the art in question emblemized the revolutionary politics in which they had been engaged. The photographs themselves were black and white, and because they had a metric scale printed at their margins, as well as a sort of bar logo in one corner, they carried a feeling of documentary exactitude. These grainy images would, to someone unfamiliar with the works themselves, convey a sense of utter bleakness and desolation: It was as if they recorded the devastation of the world. Included were some rolls of lead sheeting, as if for a fallout shelter never built; a pile of plaster in the otherwise bare corner of a bare room strewn with soldering irons, looking as if it belonged to a torture chamber; a set of fiberglass cylinders appearing to have buckled under a terrible explosion. There were boxes of rocks, a roomful of dirt, some excavations in a wasteland—and a pile of near naked bodies, connoting some infinite horror. These were, in fact, works by Richard Serra, Joseph Beuys, Eva Hesse, Robert Smithson, Walter De Maria and members of The Living Theater. As images they seemed utterly inconsistent with the "euphoric denial of limits" of which the editors nostalgically wrote, or of "imminent and profound change." They no more conveyed these hopeful messages than the cover image communicated the question Donald Kuspit said it did. There is some sort of lesson here, I dare say, of the differences between what images say and what art critics say they say. And yet the work presented on the cover exemplified, if it did not exactly express, a certain activist kind of artmaking.

As nearly everyone must know today, since the media have bestowed upon them a celebrity hardly anticipated in 1988, K.O.S. is an acronym for Kids of Survival, a name its designata conferred upon themselves. They come, as a group, from the South Bronx, and many of them would be classed as having learning problems because of dyslexia, which would

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exclude them from the systems through which there may alone have been a slight hope of fighting their way out of a destined membership in the underclass of a rough world. Tim Rollins is a conceptual artist, politically left, who found his calling as an art teacher through experiences in ghetto and near-ghetto classrooms. As an alternative, he set up the grandly named Art and Knowledge Workshop, to which he attracted a core of nonstarters to read and discuss certain works of serious literature, which they then in extended collaboration transformed into images. Kafka's *Amerika* is one such work, and the *Amerika* tableaux—there are to date twelve of these, each roughly the size of *Amerika X*—are the product of sustained collaborative execution. Both the idea of collaboration and that of finding a creative outlet for the blocked gifts of racially and economically dispossessed youth would, one must feel, be a vindication of some of the visionary aspirations memorialized twenty years after *les evénèments* by this issue of *Artforum*. Ida Panicelli, the editor of the magazine, told me that she had selected the May cover in order to celebrate the ongoing if transformed activism in the arts which was the subject of Kuspit's essay. Still, it remains for me an external fact about the work that it is "activist art," and, as I shall argue in a moment, it is perhaps central to its mission that it conceal its activist procedures and that one should be struck, as I was, not so much by the knowledge of who made it and under what conditions as by its artistic distinction alone. It may have broken limits, as art and certainly in the standing conception of the artist, but it appears, merely, as a marvelous and fascinating image.

The following February, I received a packet from the Dia Art Foundation containing transparencies of all the *Amerika* tableaux as well as some catalogues and clippings about K.O.S., and an invitation to write a catalogue essay. Dia was sponsoring an exhibition in which all the tableaux were to be brought together for the first (and very likely for the last) time, together with a number of auxiliary studies of forms that found their way into the tableaux. Now, there is in me enough of the bleeding heart to be moved, powerfully, by the image of a dedicated teacher bringing the lilacs of artistic creation out of the wasteland of human disenfranchisement. One is dutifully moved by choirs and dance ensembles that someone has had the mission and conviction to fashion out of ghetto voices and grace. But there is also something morally uncomfortable in the spectacle of black or Latino youngsters regimented onto the stage for the entertainment of white and prosperous audiences filled with a sense of their own goodness in having made the spectacle possible. Moreover, singing and dancing superlatively well are, like athletic (or sexual) prowess, believed to go with a certain limiting myth of black or Latino capabilities. ("Such a wonderful sense of rhythm! What energy! What spontaneity!") Painting seems in another category altogether. To be sure, scarcely a decade ago there was a flutter of art-world interest in graffiti, which was in every sense the equivalent, at the level of painted form, of the more characteristic ghetto expressions of breakdancing and rap music. And liberals, like radicals, have tended to insist that minorities should be encouraged to value "their own" art and to cherish "their own" traditions—exhibition of which in "our" museums seems to me often as uncomfortable as black voices in white auditoriums. What nobody expected, ever, was painting of a kind that would stand up to critical judgment as well as any of the best art-making being done. This would be like heeding parents' entreaties to come hear their child sing and to be bowled over as the 8-year-old sings, thrillingly, *Vissi d'arte* from *Tosca* or the *Kindertotenlieder*. Bleeding heart or not, I would have had no great interest in writing about an experiment in alternative education in art. But the images bowled me over. They were not just good *for* (blacks, teenagers, dyslexics or whomever). They were quite as beautiful as the cover of *Artforum* would have led me to expect. (Of course I agreed to do the essay.)

"In the time just before the first 'Amerika' painting," Rollins writes in the Dia catalogue, "there was the pressure, the desire, *the need* to create a work of art that was political, vital, critical, and yet *beautiful* all at once." I think, in fact, that his discovery was that the work he helped bring forth could not be political unless it was beautiful. He speaks of "an art political not so much in its form or content . . . but political in the very way it was made." So the *Artforum* cover did not wear its activism on its face, except that its beauty was a condition for the attainment of its activist purposes. For the same reason, the texts he works with could not be politically significant unless they were great in the first place as literature. The kind of carping at the canon

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that has the academic establishment lashed with acrimonious bickering is rooted, Rollins perceives, in middle-class attitudes. He is concerned with the transformative power of the best, and his respect for the canon is as profound as his admiration for the great art of the past. He takes it at the value it has always assumed in its most exalted moments. Kids of Survival read Hawthorne, Orwell, Defoe and Kafka, and they look at Goya, Grünewald, Leonardo and Paolo Uccello. It is less as though he were rescuing adolescents from the ghetto than using them as a way of rescuing the great cultural tradition of the West—or they rescue one another.

At the same time, I think, he has been able to bring these remarkable works into existence with the collaboration of K.O.S. only because a certain stylistic openness has been made available to them through the postmodernist discoveries of the past decade. Postmodern painting is defined through discontinuities, conceptual jumps, juxtapositions of antithetical images in conflicting scales, appropriations of motifs and manners from past art, disregard of spatial uniformities and illusions other than those to which appropriations give rise, and a propensity to use the surface of the work as opaque—that is, not as an Albertian window into a perspectival or theatrical space. I am uncertain that modernism could have opened itself up to the kind of collaborative diversity that enables K.O.S. to express themselves as one. There is an irony in the fact that postmodernism has also been cynical, exploitative, pretentious, bombastic, inflated and insistently ugly, whereas the panels of K.O.S. radiate optimism, clarity, a true sweetness and a touching hope.

The *Amerika* tableaux are K.O.S.'s great achievement, and it is a wonderful, really an exhilarating experience to see all twelve of these intricate and joyful works displayed on one of the ample gallery floors of the made-over warehouse that is Dia's main exhibition space (at 548 West 22nd Street, open 12-6 P.M. Thursday through Sunday, until June 17). Each of them, like the fragmentary panel reproduced as the cover of *Artforum*, is a dazzle of golden horns, in intricate symbiosis with monograms, staffs, crosses and other forms painted upon a background of carefully pasted and smoothed-down pages from the texts it translates. The relationship, at once physical and emblematic, of image to text has been a formula for K.O.S., but at the emblematic level it works out best—it works out spectacularly—with Kafka's odd novelistic meditation on faith, hope and charity, and especially its last chapter. In this, the narrative's protagonist, Karl Rossman, good and innocent and a kind of moral stooge, has a sequence of demoralizing adventures in which he is beaten, broken and robbed. He is as misperceived in the novel as Plato's just man who *appears* perfectly unjust, but finds a sudden hope in the Nature Theatre of Oklahoma, where everyone is qualified to do something ("From each according to his means") and where anyone can advance. The Nature Theatre of Oklahoma is a benign version of a Mitteleuropa bureaucracy—more commonly thought of as Kafkaesque except that here its immense and ramified apparatus is put to the ends of serving rather than frustrating individual purposes. It is an image of America that even or especially in the South Bronx was evidently felt to be a true allegory. Young people one would have supposed disenchanted with the American myth instead found it a compelling vision. And they seized upon that moment in the great chapter where Karl approaches the recruiting agencies of the great outdoor theater and sees, poised upon pillars and robed in white, all manner of personages, including an acquaintance of his, blowing golden horns in cacophonous immensity, like the tooters and brayers in Times Square on New Year's Eve—a crowd rather than a society.

The trumpet is a metaphor for glory, triumph, splendor, and though I know of no Zarathustra-like prophet whose saving message was, "I say unto ye, ye are all trumpets and shall all *be* trumpets!" I would have no difficulty in grasping the meaning. It is certainly the visual message of K.O.S.'s *Amerika* tableaux. The overall tangle of interlaced horns resolves, upon closer inspection, into individual components, few of which prove to be pictures of real musical instruments. Rather, the most improbable forms—leaves and bones, sticks and viscera, plants and artifacts—find themselves fitted with mouthpieces and bells, each, one feels, blowing itself, making its own music; and while the immediate aural consequence may indeed be a kind of racket, the promise of harmony is also there as each learns to fit its voice into the ensemble, just as its visual form fits into the painterly composition of K.O.S.

I heard an art critic whom I respect observe one evening on a late-night television panel that in some ways, Tim Rol-

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lins + K.O.S. are more interesting for the process by which they arrive at their productions than for those productions themselves. This is both true and false. Many of the same processes were involved in K.O.S.'s earlier projects—*The Scarlet Letter, Journal of the Plague Year, Animal Farm* and others. These, though they had their individual successes, do not *vindicate* the process as the *Amerika* series does as a whole. The Dia Foundation is responsive to the kind of politics and social enterprise Rollins displays in his creative pedagogy, but it is also aesthetically exigent, and I could not imagine it giving up the space (and time) to any of the other K.O.S. suites. It is by being as artistically successful as they are that the *Amerika* tableaux are accorded their extraordinary interest. It is not mere benevolence that explains the acquisition of these remarkable works by the Museum of Modern Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and other private and corporate collections. In the hateful idiom of the moment, K.O.S. is "hot." And I expect that if they cared to, Tim Rollins + K.O.S. could industrialize the *Amerika* format and take orders, as hot artists do today, selling pictures in advance of painting them. That cannot of course be Tim Rollins's intention, but it is the heavy shadow artistic success casts today, and it, taken in conjunction with the social facts that gave rise to K.O.S., creates for them a dilemma that cannot but concern those who reflect on the bitter price of hotness in American artistic culture.

The other TV panelists that evening could not avoid certain painful paradigms. There were, on the one side, the graffiti "writers," encouraged by an exploitative art world to inscribe their imagery on panels to be sold in a greedy market. That imagery, in my view, belonged to a form of life as ritualized as that of the Toltecs, with its own sense of history and concept of criticism and its proper set of aesthetic rules. The writers were finally unable to navigate between that world and the art world, where the conditions of creativity were altered and the meaning of their signs distorted. The promise of bucks faded with the passing of the season. They would have to be reborn into that world—by going to art school, for example—and the cynical art world would have no interest in them under those circumstances. On the other side was Jean-Michel Basquiat. Basquiat was really a kind of genius, and today one cannot see his work without being struck by his powers. Like Pollock, he could lay paint down in a way which gave it instant authority and life. But Basquiat was spoiled by fame because he interpreted it against the only model he knew, that of the spoiled rock star in a world of splurges, sexual binges and drugs. I sense that he was encouraged in this by his "advisers," and, lacking the moral counterpart of an immune system, was destined to crash.

Neither of these bad examples was on my mind when I wrote my catalogue essay on K.O.S. I thought, rather, of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood and its incapacity to adhere to the communitarian ideals it believed in sufficiently to think of itself as a brotherhood. I attribute that to the dominance over the production of art of the idea of the individual genius. The Pre-Raphaelites, who invented the art market as we know it, knew that it was a condition of success that work be seen as emanating from original genius, even as they longed for another form of life. The ideal of the individual genius, Basquiat notwithstanding, is losing its grip on the art world today—though one of the TV panelists felt the purpose of K.O.S. was to find the hidden Leonardos of the South Bronx! Collaboration is the ideal of this hour.

Tim Rollins is an inventive man, with extraordinary social gifts. Even he, I think, is uncertain where things should go next. Some of the Kids have expressed ambitions to be artists. This is wonderful, but it is also not the point of the Art and Knowledge Workshop. Somehow, the production of really important art here is a means to social and political ends. What finally Rollins is aiming at is the Nature Theatre of Oklahoma in all the South Bronxes of the world. □

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 74*)

about social justice. Within this community all of us have a great deal to learn about different forms of suffering. The dialogue is often fragile but so crucial in this time, which is perhaps a turning point in history. In the wake of Watergate, and the Iran/*contra* scandal, Stalinism, *glasnost*, is it not clear that above all we must be honest? This is not the least part of the respect and dignity we owe one another as fundamental to human rights.

Susan Griffin

The Nation welcomes letters – typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please.

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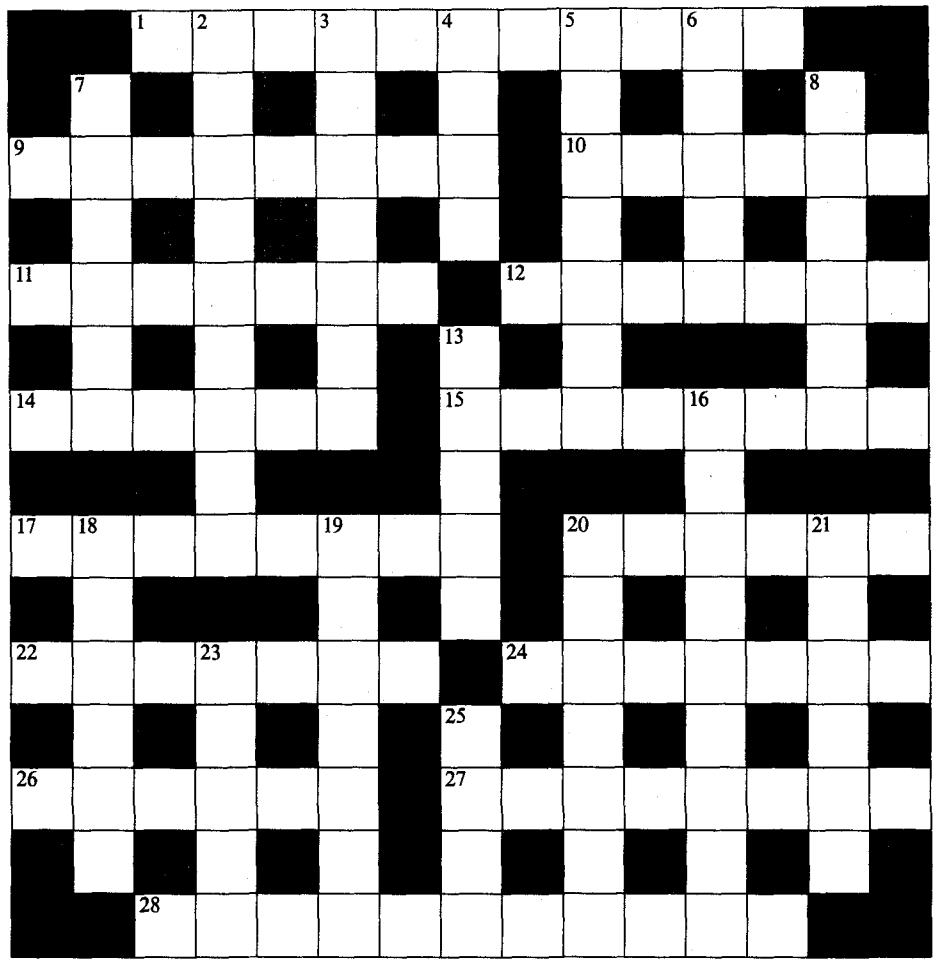

ACROSS

1 and 16 down Such might make you responsible, but the king is evidently told he has to host the festivities. (3,4,2,2,4,5)
9 Real tin's necessary, perhaps, to make the organs inside. (8)
10 A network is part of the simple X used to mark the spot. (6)
11 You'll find such a city in Italy, Peru, and one in Georgia. (7)
12 Not a hit, something with a net charge for the negotiating body. (7)
14 Back of the barrel it sounds like a violation. (6)
15 Carrying iron and wood in limited quantities, as an occupation of course. (8)
17 You'll put up with an Irishman if you do, and are content with whatever's in hand. (5,3)
20 Used to being wounded with John's head missing and so ruined? (6)
22 Are those in nongovernmental service bound to be rude? (7)
24 Both timely and important? (Nothing in the chapel's construction shows it, however.) (7)
26 Nothing but praise for the old country, perhaps! (6)
27 The sort of s.o.b. decidedly improved by what is overshadowed? (8)
28 How some altar boys appear to be stock examples, perhaps. (11)

DOWN

2 Mr. Poirot has one article which makes the solution tremendously difficult. (9)
3 No such constitution for those who were said to be coming. (7)
4 See 25
5 Gave an impression that the little devil didn't tell the truth? (7)
6 Aside from these, they show what no thinking person should be without. (5)
7 A lobe should be cause to be esteemed. (6)
8 We rather objectively should be wrong to come into this world and encourage people to cheat! (6)
13 They bled with Wallace, the costs being 27. (5)
16 See 1 across
18 One who takes care to offer something? (6)
19 Not available for public use—certainly not the general type! (7)
20 It appears that I might be out of date, proving a dilemma. (7)
21 When writing, with this as an end, the point is probably far removed. (6)
23 His work might be play, with such fibs enigmatically showing him up. (5)
25 and 4 It implies having no use for the barefoot boy as such! (8)

PUZZLED?

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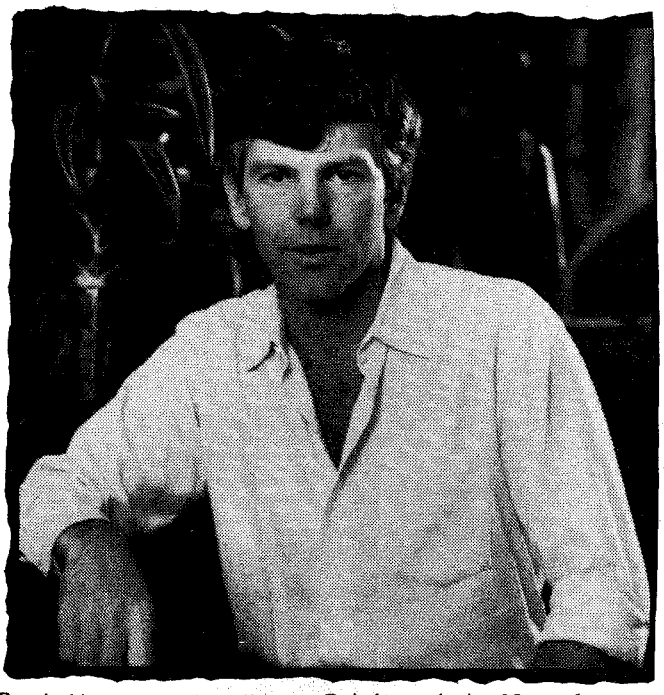

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